MEMORY HARBOUR

Filson Young

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BY FILSON YOUNG

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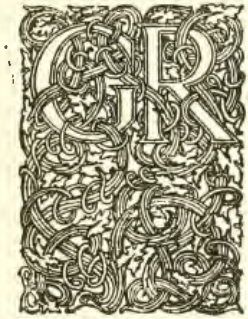

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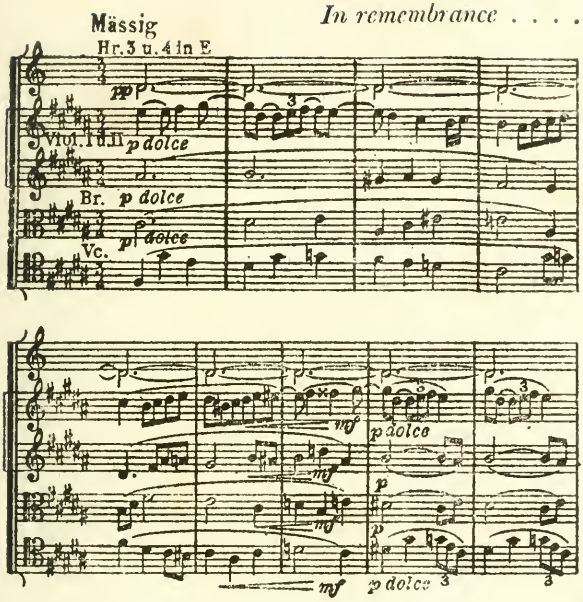

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I

MONTE CARLO

MONTE CARLO

I

WHEN the sun of our civilisation shall have come to its evening and the stones of our building crumbled to dust, when our proud age shall lie with other ages in a twilight of history and tradition, and our immortal shall have put on its last garment of mortality, then the men that follow us will begin to dig in the dust and to re-create in imagination what Time has destroyed. They will find a buried London, a forgotten Paris, an obliterated Vienna; and on a coast of memories and histories they will discover Monte Carlo.

This relic of our civilisation and its extreme of luxury they will examine with a particular care and interest, breaking gently the veil of earth, and discovering beneath it the ruins of such luxurious apparatus as was never surpassed in Rome itself. They will find tangled gardens, matted vegetation hiding floors of marble, broken pillars of whitest stone, palaces and halls, terraces and façades, vast flights of steps, mighty roads engineered in the face of the mountains. They will cut into the soft, obliterating earth; they will delve, and excavate,

and piece together; they will part the tangles of cypress and orange, of laurel and mimosa; and they will say: 'How strange and interesting, how gorgeous and luxurious this forgotten life must have been!' They will ask what were the pleasures, what was the method, and what the price of it. They will say: 'How much we should like to have been there! How much we would give if, only for a moment, we could see it as it was!' And the sun will shine on the blue velvet of the Mediterranean, the wind will sing in the tangled bushes, the sea birds and the land birds will meet crying on the orange-clad crags, but no genius will come to wave his wand, and make that dead world live again. It lives to-day for us in one moment of the twinkling changes of eternity, and for us it may be just as interesting as for those unborn sons of ours who through two thousand years will be sleeping in the womb of Time. Let us examine it closely, and discover if we can its strange character and quality.

* *
*

Two bluff arms of land enclosing a small bay; an amphitheatre of terraces, streets, houses; a cluster of white hotels and palaces with green foliage threaded and clustered between them; lonely heights of grim grey rock and mountain that pile themselves up towards a sky of calmest and

serenest blue; beneath and about all that fluent and dazzling element that can be described by no name or colour, but is best called by its own name of Mediterranean: a sheet of undulating velvet, clear as crystal, blue as heaven, dark and yet transparent, of a colour that is now peacock, now sapphire, now lapis lazuli, and now emerald, that shifts and changes and blends itself of every shade of blue and green—these are the outward and physical features of the world which we are studying.

They do not account for it entirely, they do not explain it; there is many another place on earth that might be described in almost the same terms; and yet there is no place like this place. By whatever means you approach it, and from whatever direction, it is remote, hidden, elusive. If you come to it by train, the railway approaches it by such devious ways, taking it by a long countermarch on either flank, and creeping round headlands and through cuttings, and round and round a thousand curves, that you can hardly believe that any railway train could ever find the place again. And if you come by road over the wild barrier of mountains that shuts the world out, you will find that you pass some subtle frontier that has no guard-house, and is marked on no map, but beyond which the perfumes and the airs whisper to you that you are in a chosen and fortunate land. Arms of land enclosing a small bay; amphitheatre of terraces, streets, houses, clusters of white hotels

and palaces, with green foliage threaded and clustered between them; lonely heights of grim grey rock and mountain that pile themselves up towards a sky of calmest and serenest blue; beneath and about all the Mediterranean—of these components is formed a world of charm and unreality where in the twentieth century of the Christian era the civilisation of pleasure has come to its zenith.

* * *

This world of mountains, palaces, blue waters, smiling suns, flower-gemmed and sap-scented, is shut in by more than the sea and the mountains. It is compassed about by invisible walls, guarded by invisible sentries. The charms that are woven about it have Nature in league with them, for she, too, has her sentries there to forbid the passage of winter and storm. The clouds come floating across France to the edge of the grey mountains, and look over them into the sea; but they do not pass beyond the sky-line. The sea has its storms, its grey, desolate tumults; even this Mediterranean has its wild, cold moods; but here also Nature has her line of outposts, and somewhere out on the dim blue horizon there is a chain of her sentries who forbid these sea-tumults to advance beyond them. Wandering showers and breezes there may be that sometimes slip through the outposts and advance upon the charmed world; but even they

soon lose their sting, and turn their wrath to laughter when they land upon the fortunate shore. And all this protection and jealousy exist, not to keep the land in a state of melancholy isolation, but to make it a happy place for those who enter.

For there is a gate in the invisible walls, and there is a key to the gate; and there is a secret or pass-word that will secure for you the friendly salute of the sentries. The key is of no use without the pass-word, nor the pass-word without the key. The key you must obtain by toil or chance; the pass-word, if you have it at all, you bring with you into the world; and if you are born without it, you can hardly afterwards come by it. The key is that universal golden key which unlocks so many of the world's doors, and without which so many of the world's gardens must remain for ever unvisited. A golden key, indeed, for no poor person is happy or welcome in Monte Carlo. You may be poor before you go there, you may be poor when you have left it; but you must not be poor while you are there.

When I speak of Monte Carlo I speak of the little world that clings about the most easterly of the two headlands that shelter the bay—a world enclosed by a few hundred square yards of gardens and buildings. There are a great many houses in Monte Carlo where people live and strive and suffer, and go through the normal life of man; there is a commercial, a social, a civic life that goes

on there from year to year; but it has nothing to do with the charmed existence of pleasure. That real world is, in this land of paradox, but a parasite on the unreal world that lives its brief life of sunny winter months here.

The society of Monaco is a society of its own—the society of people who have the key and the secret. Ordinary social laws have nothing to do with this secret. Many never come to this world who, if they came, would make it their own, and be received with smiles and welcomes; others, naving the key but not the secret, come here year after year, and move about and mingle with the happy throng, who yet never enter the charmed world, never breathe its atmosphere, never live its life. It has nothing to do with social orders; it is a matter of temperament, and if you are one of the fortunate ones, although you may never have been here in your life before, you will come to it as to a familiar country, enter into it as into a birthright, and possess it for your own.

* * *

What is this secret? It is not money, because by money alone man may not possess this land of pleasure. There is no place in the world, I believe, in which money is so important an element, and where it is so well harnessed to service. Money is not master here, but slave; it is everywhere and it

is nowhere; you may exchange it here, you may get it for nothing here, but you cannot buy it here. It floats in the air, a golden, impalpable dust that will not be coined; a Rheingold that stays floating in its own element, and will not be ravished from it.

All the wealth of the civilised world is represented in Monte Carlo during a few months in the year, and yet, perhaps, it is the only place in the world where wealth is robbed of its cruelty and vulgarity. There is money in Monte Carlo, but there is no finance; there are giving and taking, but there is no commerce; there is exchange, but there is no buying and selling; there are winning and losing, but there is no success or failure. Money flows and shimmers in the air, the sunshine is pure gold, you breathe it like an element; and yet not money, but temperament is the secret—the ability to accept happiness with smiling toleration, and without undue exaggeration or analysis; a due ignorance of, and aversion from, the ugly sides of life; a willingness to receive and impart, a readiness to forget. This family of pleasure may be the last corrupt flower of our civilisation, but it has a curious charm of its own. It is a flower without stem or roots in life, and therefore it flourishes in this place where nothing has any depth or reality, where life is like a picture thrown in painted lights on a screen, beautiful and deep as to its colours, empty and shallow as to its substance. Pleasure is a thing of the surface, pain a thing of the deeps;

and upon this shimmering surface only pleasure flourishes. It is not that unhappiness and ennui are not possible here, it is that they do not flourish here as they flourish in some other and deeper soils.

The soul of Monte Carlo is thus enshrined in the palace on the hill, where all day and half the night the atmosphere is heavy with golden particles, where everything that wealth can buy may, if only chance be happy, come within the reach of any one of the throng who enters the doors. You may enter them a pauper and come out a millionaire; you may enter them a bankrupt and come out a man level with the world again; and by doing exactly the same thing you may reverse the process, and enter a millionaire and come out a pauper. Whether it is excitement or amusement, loss or gain, despair or triumph, there is always occupation at the tables; and the chink of gold is but a note in the orchestra to whose music the hours of this world are lightly fleeted.

* *
*

It is gold, and not money, that is the master passion here. In the outer world the primitive greed of gold has given place to the passion for power and possessions that is the increasing fever of civilisation. It would be natural and logical that the things which can be purchased with gold should be more highly esteemed than the bright

metal itself; it would be an evidence of development and progress; and yet one is tempted to think that the old passion for gold in the form of actual treasure, minted or unminted, is a more natural and less hurtful disease than the modern sophisticated craving for fortunes that are reckoned merely on paper. Ever since man first ravished it from the dark places of the earth, blood and sorrow have been the inevitable accompaniment of the lust for gold; and as the gold was visible and tangible, shining before the eyes, heavy in the hand, so the blood and suffering that it produced were immediately visible also to the eyes of those who sought it. Now the fortunes that men make are invisible; they only exist in ledgers, in legal registers of companies, in rows of figures inscribed in the books of banks; a man may amass a mighty fortune in these days, and never soil his hands with anything except ink. Yet it would be hard to believe that these huge agglomerations of paper wealth are brought together to an accompaniment of human misery less acute and far-reaching than that which soiled the ancient fortunes of gold that were contained in cases and boxes. There is perhaps even more suffering now, but it is more diffused, more obscure, less visible. As the number and bulk of the modern fortunes increase, one realises how little true enjoyment there is to be had out of them; and one sees men groaning under the burden of wealth that instinct forbids

them to shake off. The newspapers every day contain the account of some millionaire's convulsions under the burden; sometimes laborious convulsions of the brain and conscience, as of a man really striving painfully to do some useful thing with his wealth; sometimes mere cheap and irresponsible efforts to throw the superfluity to the yelping hungry hoard when the possessor can enjoy it no longer.

The more one sees of it, the more one is convinced that in this matter of wealth there is no such thing as possession, unless a man actually hold the bright gold in his hand, and fight to keep it there. The modern millionaire cannot be said to possess as the old pirates and buccaneers possessed. The paper fortune is not possessed; the things it buys, although one man's name may be inscribed upon them, are really all the time in the possession of those who use and enjoy them; and the willing or giving of them away is often little more than an empty and impotent gesture.

Gold is always in movement; and there seems to be a property and gravity in the metal itself which makes it constantly tend to sink again towards the depths from which it came. I read a little while ago of a man who found the Treasure of Magellan in some remote part of the southern world, and was obliged to give it up to the Government of Brazil. It was two millions sterling, I believe, and doubtless the finder thought

himself very much aggrieved; but really when he had found it by digging in the earth, and had fished it up from its long slumber in oblivion, he had done all the possessing of it that was possible to him; he had got the best of it. After that it ceased to be the Treasure of Magellan, and became two millions sterling—a sum which any one out of a dozen dyspeptic American financiers would laugh at. But if the man who found it possessed it more than the Government which afterwards seized it, the real and chief possessor of it was of course Magellan — that thick-lipped, broad-featured voyager who forced his mutinous crews through the tortuous strait that bears his name with so bloody and courageous a spirit. It was the man that buried it who really possessed the gold; he that saw it packed away in the dark, and knew that no one else could use or enjoy it, who really made it his own in so far as that is possible.

And it seems to be so almost universally; gold cannot be long possessed or held above the earth; it must be restored to a depth. If you think of any particular treasure of gold it is almost always a buried treasure, even if it be buried only deeper than in the vaults of a bank; but buried it is somewhere if it is a treasure, either in the earth or in the depths of the sea. It will not stay long on the surface of life; its course is always downward; it slips through the fingers, burns holes in the pockets, sinks down into the mountains, into the deep

vaults of the bank, into the earth, into the sea. It never rises of itself; no earthquake or smoking mountain ever vomits forth gold; it can only be raised by the labour and pain of man.

All over the world it lies buried in masses; round all the stormy coasts of Europe there are treasure-ships sunk; suspended in the dark green depths of the sea there must be miles and miles of ghostly wrecks and of ghostly fortunes greater far in magnitude than any that are on the surface of the earth. The great westward currents of the Atlantic that spray round the Gulf of Mexico and set the whole contents of the vast ocean basin spinning like tea in a teacup, as they collect the weeds of the Atlantic in the Sargasso Sea, must surely also gather the treasures of the Atlantic somewhere in the same region. The wealth in gold that must lie there is a thing to stagger the imagination; and some day, I suppose, when the sea depths have lost their terrors for man, it will all be fished up and twinkled for a moment again in the sunshine. But it will be only for a moment; and it will work its way downwards again into those sunless depths where it cannot glitter and cannot hurt.

And in the meantime we have invented in Monte Carlo a game of piracy in which, instead of cutting one another's throats, we lose or win according to the rules of the game, and fight only against chance. There the gold lies, red in the sunset; come and see the game.

II

Evening, the grateful cool evening of the South, has stolen down from the mountains and hangs fragrantly in the darkening sky. The odorous shrubs in the garden send out their perfume more persistently; the dust of the day has subsided; lamps glow amid the flowers; men and women, some of the most lovely of women and the most beautifully attired, walk on the spotless pavements as though they walked on a lighted stage. The murmur of music, melodies of passion and romance, steal from violins out of the cafés and among the trees. There is a rustle of feet, a whisper of dresses, a hum of voices.

This is under the evening sky; but as you pass under the great portals of the Casino and enter the rooms the odour of the evening and the perfumes of flowering shrubs fade and vanish suddenly like an overture that is ended. The lights blaze from the chandeliers on the decorated walls and marble floor of the atrium; the atmosphere thickens, becomes less fragrant, less sparkling, grows heavy and overpowering like a drug. Room after room opens before you filled with a throng that flows in and out and moves in eddying orbits round the tables. There is something in the atmosphere that is strange and compelling; you realise that you are approaching the heart of some-

thing, that you are coming near the centre of a system of tides and currents and influences that has drawn men and women from North and South, and East and West, from San Francisco and from St. Petersburg, from the Northern and the Southern seas.

You come nearer, pulled as though by a magnet, to where the throng is gathered round the light and green baize of a table. Its edge is fenced by a seated row of men and women, with piles of money before them, little and big; with books and diagrams and columns of figures; with faces very intent and a little hard. In the middle of the table and at its ends and sides sit the stolid croupiers with their rakes and their cases of money; and all the time, except when the ball is spinning and the cards are being dealt, money is being pushed about by those rakes—money enough to replenish a starving town, to build a bridge or a ship, to found a family, to reclaim an estate, to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, procure from Rome forgiveness of sins, and buy the Kingdom of Heaven.

* * *

You look closely; the wheel, touched by the deft finger of a croupier, turns on its perfect bearings; the little ball dances and skips; piles of money rest motionless on the table. An eager hand thrusts out at the last moment a column of gold and puts

it on a number; another hand, trembling and eager also, thrusts out a five-franc piece and lays it on another square. '*Rien n'va plus*'—the fateful words are spoken crisply by a nonchalant croupier as the little ball bounces and comes to rest in a number as yet invisible. There is a moment of complete suspense; and as the wheel slows down and gives up its secret to the imperfect vision that was too slow to follow its circling progress, the number is announced.

The rakes are put forth and money is swept about as though it were garden mould. One greedy rake comes out collecting piles of gold, piles of silver, single pieces, paper notes; but it travels skilfully, there is a purpose in its direction; it passes among the stakes like the Angel of Death, sweeping up this one, leaving that one. The pile of gold that was put forth at the last moment is swept contemptuously up with the rest; the fortune is dragged across the table, sorted and sifted and packed into the bursting coffers of the bank. And simultaneously another process has been going on; no coin that was left and that escaped the rake but is added to by a hand as generous as it was cruel; and to every coin or pile of coins left standing, other coins and piles of coins and notes are thrown as contemptuously and carelessly as the unfortunate ones were raked away. Bouncing, tripping, bounding across the green table, the beautiful warm yellow of the gold dancing in the light,

the coins are tossed with an unerring aim to their destinations. The pile of louis is gone; but the single five-franc piece has had many five-franc pieces added to it, and golden pieces as well. And before it has been taken away, before it has been counted or possessed, money is falling upon the table again as fast as leaves upon an autumn lawn.

You look more closely still, you look at the hedge of faces set about the table. What do you see? Upon most of them there is a mask; hardly any one is himself or herself there; every one is pretending. Some are pretending to indifference, some are pretending to certainty, some follow the course of the ball with eager, straining eyes, others will not be induced to look at it—as if any action of theirs could change or deflect its ultimate destiny! Some people are strolling about from table to table, putting a piece here and a piece there, waiting to see it swept up by the contemptuous rake, and moving away again to repeat the adventure.

All the commonplaces, all the truths, all the epigrams and platitudes that have been written about fate and chance and luck are exemplified in these crowded rooms; and the whole thing is but an illusion of sight and sound; the circling and bouncing little ball—surely an unworthy embodiment of the blind goddess—the ripple and rustle, the beautiful warm yellow gold, the crisp whispering notes. So much gold, so many notes! Not tens and twenties, but hundreds and thousands and

hundreds of thousands; mighty portions of it yours, perhaps, if you will but throw a piece on the table. For you might throw a single louis upon the table, and go away and saunter the length of the rooms, looking at the other tables, and watching the other falling or rising fortunes, and you might saunter back again and find the single coin that you left on the table to accumulate grown to such a sum as would place you beyond want for the rest of your life.

That is one reason why money, although it is a good slave, is not a master in Monte Carlo. There is no true difference there between those who are rich and those who are not rich, for money is given away daily there, and the poorest man may walk into the rooms, and come out the richest. And the secret of it all is nothing; blank, negative nothing. Chance has a system, doubtless orderly and calculable enough, but one that requires infinity and eternity for its exhibition; and we who play with it in a second are playing with something that has all time to play against us. The chance, although it is real and contains vast possibilities, is only on one side. There is a chance that we may win, but there is a certainty that we shall lose.

* * *

Warm masses of gold pushed about the smooth baize, neat piles of silver and bundles of notes tossed from this number to that, raked in and

raked out, pushed away and drawn in, risked, secured, won, lost—there is a secret about them, too. This golden load upon the tables looks like money, it feels like money, chinks like the money that will buy you houses and palaces and costly wines and careless hours; but it is not that money. It is not money at all. The coins that you stake upon these tables are charmed and bewitched; they are not subject to the same laws and influences as are those other coins with which you paid the bill for your dinner. Like bodies placed suddenly in an element of different density from that to which they are accustomed, these coins lose gravity and substance; they become light and worthless. A sum that, if you are of the company that works and earns, would have cost you weeks and perhaps months of toil, you treat here as contemptuously as dust beneath your feet. A sheaf of notes lies before you that would purchase new kingdoms for you, that would give you the freedom of new countries, and carry you round the world; do you seize it, and take it away and enjoy it? You think that you might do so, but in fact you do nothing of the kind.

For this is not real money; it is ghost money. You cannot buy anything with it, you cannot even exchange it for anything except this feverish drug that lurks in the blood and glimmers in the eyes of the gamblers. It will not buy happiness for you, nor bread, nor shelter, nor peace; and if you

want it very much, or need it very much, you may be sure it will not come to you. Perhaps you look hungrily and wistfully at the columns of gold and the stacks of bank-notes, and you allow yourself for a moment to think of what they might buy you. They will buy you nothing; you cannot possess them; although they stand in your name on the table, although you may even grasp them for a moment in your hands and think that they are yours, they are not yours. They are nothing at all; they are like a mirage seen on the horizon of your hopes, the false loom of your desired land-fall; they are decoys to tempt and draw out the solid counterpart of themselves with which you pay your way in the world.

* * *

You put your coins on the table; you will play no more; you are careless of the result; you put them on a number and turn away, leaving them surrounded, confused, touched by dozens of other stakes. No one seems to heed you; but watchful eyes, trained to memory and observation, have identified you, among the hundred other players, with that featureless pile of gold that lies among a hundred other piles. You wander away from the rattle and glitter, past the many tables, to a window open to the night; and there you come upon a contrast that only Monte Carlo can offer.

Behind you are the light and clamour, the hot excitement and intoxication of the gold-drugged atmosphere, the garish, artificial day of pleasure; before you are the night and the stars. Framed in the window is a picture of eternal peace and loveliness; the deep, dark sea, divided by a white pathway of moonlight; stars, remote and serene; distance, silence, darkness fragrant and profound. Cool and sweet is the air at those open windows, and laden with the freshness of the open sea; and it would need to be sweet, for the atmosphere it renews is bitter and heavy with the fume of gold, and, as you turn back into the room, beats upon you like the scarlet heat of a furnace.

You have almost forgotten which was your table; and when you find it again many days have passed in the calendar of the circling wheel, many stakes have been won and lost, many of the surrounding faces have changed. Yet the ministers of Fate have remembered you; your stake has been watched over and protected from covetous fingers by a dexterous gesture of the guarding, devouring, endowing rake; while you were at the window it has grown. A rake, impersonal and contemptuous, pushes it towards you, thrusts it forward, stands in front of it, until the lawful hand, among so many unlawful ones, takes it up. The cold memory of the croupier identifies you, his cold eye observes you; your own has been guarded for you by a police system the most elaborate, the

most invisible, the most gentle and powerful and unassailable in the world.

All round you in Monte Carlo are protecting agents—not to punish or entrap the evil-doer, but to guard him from himself, if possible, and the majority from him. In the throng about the tables, in the busy hotels and restaurants, in the gardens and cafés, these agents and policemen in polite disguise meet and surround and rub shoulders with you. There is hardly a uniformed policeman to be seen, for the paternal authority does not impolitely intrude itself; if all goes well it is invisible, non-existent; but at the first hint of crime against the mild rule of the place, the whole crowd of pleasure becomes shot with the colour of law, as leafage of beech-trees is shot with silver by a passing breeze. Do not ruffle it, and the surface of this life will sleep as calmly and happily as a summer sea; stir it against itself and it will present on the instant a surface impassable, a hedge of thorns impenetrable.

* * *

I have said that upon the surface only the colours of pleasure can be thrown, and that pain will not take root in it. But all pleasures are paid for, although the coinages in which we pay are many and various; and this life of happy sunlit hours is certainly exchanged for a price which men

and women, according to their nature and kind, pay in coinage of gold or tears, of nerve or heart. I do not profess to know where or how the payments are made; but I do know that in some obscure way they are cleared and exchanged in that white-domed building on the cliff where the feverish eyes follow the ebb and flow of gold.

When the *dernier coup* has been called, and the crowd goes away from the tables and flows out into the calm darkness, it is good to walk for a little while in the Casino gardens, to let the fever cool and die down in their scented silence, and to recover the meaning and secret of the place. From the cafés come murmurs of voices and music; there is wine, there is feasting, there is laughter there. Here are darkness, solitude, silence; eyes are watching you, the protecting eyes of the Principality, but they will not intrude upon you; you may sit here for a moment and listen to the drip and trickle of a fountain, the shivering of the palms in the night airs, the quiet surge of the Mediterranean beneath you. Strange, passionate perfumes, the night-odours of the South, steal upon you through the warm darkness. And it is then that, if you are of the kind that uses the coinage of the heart, you will make your payment to the presiding gods of this happy land.

For in those gardens are many ghosts; ghosts of hope, ghosts of despair; ghosts of men who have come face to face there with ultimate destiny; men

who have seen truth there, found death there, found life there. You also, if the spirit of the place has come upon you, will leave a ghost there; for no one ever feels anything without producing something, and no one can see truth or beauty without adding to the sum of beauty and truth. . . The laughter has ceased in the cafés; the pavements, already spotless, are being washed by the servants of the night; the sky is glowing with a luminous blue, the bloom of a new day. And as the light comes it shows you this little world silent, deserted, in a glory of tender beauty, hanging in the dawn like a magic garden over sea, under sky, between one azure deep and another—Monaco, that goodly land, resting on the knees of the grey, grim mountains, who once unmoved witnessed its rise and will one day look down unmoved upon its ruins; Monaco, seen by living eyes, trod by living feet in this century and year and day of time.

Monte Carlo, 1906.

II

THE YEAR IN CORNWALL

THE YEAR IN CORNWALL

I

SPRING

EARLY one morning, before any of the small world about me was awake, I went along the cliffs until I had found a seat where the grass was warmed by the early sunbeams, and sat down there. Far below me was the sea and a rock where the gulls had their nests, and about which through all the spring and summer they circle and pipe continually. It seemed a good place for working, and I had brought paper and pencils. I had meant to write about the people who at the first call of spring come out on the road, and to whom it is both home and workshop; the gipsies and tramps and itinerant vendors who know no other world but that of the roads. I had meant to call the article 'Wayfarers,' and to record in it the impression I had received lately of a village fair at night, with its little town of tents and booths and waggons, its costly steam organs and roundabouts, and its little theatre erected on the Common where the grasses and daisies pushed themselves up between the plush seats of the stalls. There was a girl there who danced on the

platform in front of one of the steam organs in the flare of the naphtha lamps; a tired-looking girl, slender and lissome, whose pretty blue eyes looked wearily across the sea of village faces. These were the impressions that were in my mind, and I came here to think about them and to weave them into something like what I wanted to express. But I could not think. There was literally nothing to distract me; the tall warm grasses waving about my head, the piping of the gulls, the continuous threshing of the waves below me, and the distant trickle of melody from a lark in the sky, were not distracting at all; they were lulling, soothing. I kept trying to think about my 'Wayfarers,' but I could not hold the thoughts; they slid out of my grasp like slippery fish, and refused to be caught and tied into the neat bundles we call consecutive thinking. It was because there was nothing to distract me that I could not think, for no one can think who is perfectly happy and at peace. We can think with a book or a pen in our hands, or in the presence of people or things that, pleasantly or unpleasantly, disturb our peace; but on this spring morning, with nothing but the sea and the grass and the sunshine and the breezes, thought was far away.

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It troubled me a little that my chapter had thus gone from me, and that the impression I sought to record would not come back to my

thoughts; and then I said to myself, 'Why cannot you be honest? Why must you try to search outside what is real and immediate? If you must write, why do you not write about the thing that matters to you most of all at the moment?' And then I realised that what mattered to me most of all was simply nothing; it was merely living and breathing and being steeped in sensation, which is the highest consciousness of life that we have. In such true moments you can no more control or force thought than you can control the breezes about your head. At one moment it is the particular way in which the seagull's voice is modulated that claims your attention, at another it is the shape of a piece of grass; now it is a line traced by the wind on the surface of the sea, now it is the dog beside you who snaps lazily at a passing fly and does not mind if he misses it. But whatever it is, it is never real thought. When one is happy, one dreams and wonders and imagines; but the painful process of fitting one thought with another, like the forging of a chain, the finding of the thoughts which we seek and welding them closely to the thoughts before and behind them, is work; and work is incompatible with the state of happiness.

When any one tells me that he likes work, I know that he is either insincere or, more likely, that he does not understand the meaning and use of words. No one likes work; no normal person can possibly

derive enjoyment from the actual fact of work. It is possible to enjoy the sensations that work produces; it is possible even to enjoy the sense that work is being done; it is easy to enjoy the feeling that a piece of work has been done; if one's work takes one into the open air, one can enjoy the open air; if it exercises the muscles of the body, one can enjoy that exercise; but one does not enjoy the work itself, nor the necessity for work. It is only in so far as it produces sensation, and pleasurable sensation, that work is tolerable. It is the primal curse — a kind of fidgets implanted in mankind when the idle dreaming days of Eden were over; and if it were possible for every human being in the world to cease suddenly and for ever from any kind of work, there would come, after a period of bloodshed and horror, a heavenly peace again, and Paradise would be restored. But it is not possible. The curse is in the blood; it is a disease, infectious, inherited, and contagious; where there are two human beings together the seed of work will take root and flourish. Yet one has to work only because other people work, and because one has to live—or because one thinks one has to live, which is the same thing. The butterfly does not work, and he lives through a long summer's day; a day filled with love and sunshine and happy wandering among flowers; a longer and happier day than the day of labour.

All the time I was lying on the cliff-side the

tide was coming in, and as it came in it wakened the little fishing village on the coast. One by one the chimneys sent up a straight column of blue smoke into the faint mist that lay beneath the sun in the valley; one by one the window-blinds were drawn up, one by one the fishermen came out from their stuffy bedrooms to breathe the salt morning air and to prepare for work. The tide is their master; and as the moon troubles the sea, drawing it this way and that in solar and lunar periods, so the tides trouble these men of the sea-coast and draw them to the daily task. At whatever hour of the night or morning it is high water, the tide comes creeping up the narrow little cove and calls the sleepers from their dreams; they wake at this summons as though a trumpet had been sounded in their ears. Whether in the dead of night, whether at one or two or three or four in the morning, when the rest of the world is fast asleep, this silent, invisible spirit of unrest calls to them when the tide is full.

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The sedentary poet, sitting with his book on the cliffs, and seeing the fisherman's boat in the bay, thinks that the fisherman enjoys his work, and rejoices in the task that sends him bounding in his bark o'er the main. It is not so. The fisherman, consciously or unconsciously, curses the hour that calls him from his frowsy bed; curses the necessity that drives him to the daily task of

catching fish. He does not want to bound o'er the main, but to sit at home or in the public-house, or lounge on the long bench against the sea-wall. The poet on the cliffs, who cannot think of a new rhyme to 'main,' envies the fisherman his free salt life; and the fisherman, looking up at the cliffs, envies the man whose work it is to make marks with a pencil on a piece of paper. Why? Because to sail in a boat is not work to the poet, and to write upon paper is not work to the fisherman.

The dream and prayer of both of them is to be free from the primal curse, to shake off the burden which, according to the Christian legend, man's fall has bound on their backs. All real work is painful, if it is the kind of work in which one's best faculties are used. It would not be painful to me to make a box, because it is not my business; but for the man who is really fitted for box-making it is a very painful and difficult thing to make a good box. And however hard it may be for you to read this chapter, it is not nearly so hard as it was for me to write it; this morning it has cost me effort and distress; and only this afternoon shall I be happy again, so long as the sense that it is finished overshadows the looming sense of to-morrow's task. And that is how we live, so far as work is concerned; and it is only in the hours when we do not think or work, but rather dream and forget, that we are really happy. If you see a man singing at his work, you may know that he is indeed

happy, for it means that he is not thinking, that he has forgotten the curse, that his thoughts are playing dreamily about something other than his work, something that is pleasant to him. For we can only sing when we dream, and we can only dream when we forget.

II

On this remote edge of Cornwall life goes very regularly by sea and land; you can tell the day of the week by the funnels of the liners that pass to and fro, making landfall or departure, and the time of day by the outbreaks of childish cries that mark the intervals of scholastic labour. For the children are by far the most numerous and mobile part of our population; they go to and fro outside my window four times a day, like the tides at sea. Every morning the bell of the village school rings as the postman delivers his bundle; and while I am reading in my paper of the day before about the mighty contest that is waging over the Education Bill in far-distant London, the children are scraping and scuffling past on their way to school. So long as you do not look out of the window the thunders of Olympus sound in your ears; echoes of great speeches, of talk about clauses and closures; of tests and standards; you read of Bishops marching, and of indignation or enthusiasm so formidable that it has to be conveyed

by special trains. But if you look out of the window the thunder ceases, and in the morning sunshine, little feet go pattering by on the road to the house of knowledge. When the bell stops a sound of shrill voices raised in a hymn floats out on the scented air; and after that, if you walk past the building wherein they are hived you may hear now a confused buzzing or murmuring, now an insistent rhythmical chant which expert ears will identify as the multiplication table issuing from a score of infant throats. Anon the buzzing ceases; the doors are opened, and the whole of the childish swarm issues from the building to a period of noise and commotion in the outer yard. The bell rings again, and they are gathered in; the buzzing and rhyming begin anew; and so throughout the day the bell, like that of a monastery, signals the young generation to sittings down and risings up, to the making of varying kinds of noises, and to the other harmless pursuits associated with the acquisition of elementary learning. And when it is all over, and the sun is sloping round to the other side of the playground, the voices rise again into the licensed uproar of the hymn, the street swarms again with life, and the schoolmaster, hanging up the key behind his own door, whistles to his dog for a walk.

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What transpires within these ivied walls is to me a pleasant mystery, like the activities of bees in

a hive; and I sometimes think that if the wall of the school were made of glass and one could spy upon the little creatures at their tasks, the mystery would not be greatly lessened. But it is certain at least that what they do there is not important, and that the real business of their day begins after the door as closed upon the empty schoolhouse. It is then that little Jane goes to carry the milk, and little Tom to earn sixpence a week by weeding the paths in the rectory garden, and the bigger Janes take up their household duties, cleaning or baby-minding, and the bigger Toms help to water the horses and milk the cows. It is by their conduct in these occupations that their progress in life is marked; it is for their failures in them that they get slapped and for their successes that they are rewarded, and thus begin to feel their way through life and the world. It is the little boy who excels in weeding, or to whose small piping voice the heavy lumbering cows, widely scattered over the croft, will mysteriously respond, who discovers his true vocation and begins to cultivate it; those droning buzzing hours in the schoolhouse are a pure blank in his efficient little life, and represent merely a period of forced inaction. For from little Jane and little Tom I look to big Jane and big Tom, their parents and progenitors; and in them I see a development and evolution of the nursing and the milking and of the weeding and the cattle-calling; but no evolution or development

at all of all those activities fostered within the buzzing hive. They have, on the contrary, perished and died down utterly; big Tom and big Jane, arrived at years of discretion, have already been for long at the business of life, and have quite got rid of the buzzing superfluities; feeling the better for it and moving more freely through the world, no longer enlightened, perhaps, but considerably lightened.

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What actually is this strange plant which is tended so carefully in every village hothouse to die off as soon as the open airs of heaven blow on it? The weed of school-knowledge may be a very necessary thing in towns where it is cultivated as a commercial asset in the ghastly struggle that takes place at the foot of every mercantile ladder; and it is a bone over which the divided sects of Christianity may be left to snarl and snap. But in the name of wisdom, what bearing has it (other than through the relief it affords to overworked mothers) upon the lives that grow up and die down through generation after generation of life in remote rural England? Let us consider big Tom and big Jane, who represent the destiny and harvest of all little Tom-hood and Jane-hood. How are they affected by those buzzing hours they spent in the schoolhouse, with backs curved over desks? They 'know history,' it is true, but then they cannot talk as their fathers and mothers could,

whose minds communicated with those of their fellows solely through speech and hearing. They can read, but they are not so wise as their unlettered parents who read in the book of life and fingered for themselves its raised letters. They can read, but as fast and as far as the minds of their generation have reached up to the mystery of letters, so fast and so far has the trade of letters reached down to them; and millionaires have battened on the proceeds. The famous director of a firm famous for its manufacture and sale of this elementary printed matter once said to me, when he brought out a cheap paper in which the world's most sensational news was pictured in blurred photographs: 'We'd got pretty low before, when we brought out a newspaper for people who couldn't think; but now we've got a newspaper for people who can't even read.' My friend was ingenious, you see, and could even do without the elementary schools; but he realised that they were no enemies to his speculations, and that people can learn to spell without learning to read.

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When the sun comes round and the little people have all left the schoolhouse and set about their serious daily occupations, there may, it is true, be one who lingers about its hallowed precincts and who cons his book beneath the churchyard elms, to whom school and books are a kind of intellectual

skylight, showing him space and heaven above the low roof of his environment. It may be so; the elongated village head is to be found in the lower ranks of all the minor professions. A head leaden with the weight of many cares, and not buoyant either with learning or happiness: attached, moreover, to a village body cheated out of its corduroys. The loiterer by the schoolhouse is only of two kinds. Either he is a true genius, to whom the schoolhouse will be neither barrier or bridge; or he is a product of the knowledge grinder, and has discovered in book learning a means of livelihood in the pursuit of which Giles and Hodge cannot compete with him. His leap to the skylight has perhaps taken him through it and landed him in the freer air, but it has not given him wings; he has only exchanged the floor for the roof; he is but a story higher; the stars are as far above him as ever—and the nights are cold.

III

I have said so much about the schoolhouse because it is the real centre of the village, and the home of such communal, social life as we can boast; the concerts take place there, at which the summer visitors dazzle us with their gifts; there our political meetings are held, there the Foresters transact their mysterious ritual, and there the village band practises. It is with the village band that my

happiest impressions of the returning spring are interwoven ; for when the winter night was darkest and social resources at their very smallest, I once, passing by the lighted windows of the schoolhouse, heard the strains of the Austrian national hymn played with a certain crude breadth that made my music-starved soul rejoice. I went in, was made welcome — was made Vice-President even — and became a silent, happy member of that circle of weathered faces that shone like the brass instruments in the glare of the paraffin lamp.

They were my friends of the village—farmer, carrier, fisherman, labourer, joiner, schoolmaster, apprentice—and never so much my friends as in those hours when the feet were cold on the floor, and the breath came like smoke out of the bells of the instruments, and the inevitable blowing, spitting, lip-pursing, and snorting inseparable from the bandsman's ideas of efficiency were mingled with the strains of 'Flowers of the Forest,' and other favourite selections. But there came a night when, the ears being a little tortured, I thought it a pity that so much earnestness should be wasted on worthless music, and when, being asked to write something for the band, I took counsel with the bandmaster as to the compass of instruments, and set to work. The acquiring of a new technique is always delightful, and as I had hitherto only written for a full orchestra the appearance of a score consisting of nothing but treble clefs, and in which no

instrument was written either in the key of the piece or the key in which it sounded, was something new and strange. But in one long evening I had mastered that, and on the next produced a little arrangement of the old Highland melody, 'Turn ye to me,' as a euphonium solo, with a low, breathing accompaniment for the rest of the band.

At our first rehearsal my friends looked critically at their MS. band parts, but indulgently tried them over. The difficulty was to get them to play softly enough; those large lungs, expanded with toil and braced by the winter sea winds, were impatient of the restraints of my sustained *pianissimo;* but in the end we did get into it a little suggestion of the deep breathing of the sea and the salt midnight loneliness of the old Northern song:

> The stars are shining cheerily, cheerily,
> Horo Mhairi dhu, turn ye to me . . . .
> The sea-mew is moaning drearily, drearily,
> Horo Mhairi dhu, turn ye to me.
> Cold is the storm-wind that ruffles his breast,
> But warm are the downy plumes lining his nest,
> Cold blows the storm there,
> Soft falls the snow there,
> Horo Mhairi dhu, turn ye to me!

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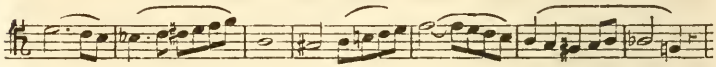
But our—or rather my—ambition was not long content with this. With the small experience gained by this score, and long before the perform-

ance of it was perfect, I had produced something the thought of which will make amateurs of Wagner hold up their hands in horror—nothing less than a selection from *Die Meistersinger!* It sounds impossible, but it is not. It began with the first fourteen bars of the overture, went on to the choral of baptism and the organist's postlude, included a soft transition passage from the end of the second act, the first and third verses of Walther's song, more transition, '*Wach' auf*,' and ended with the last fifteen bars of the opera. The problem was to score all this for twelve instruments, and to give every one in turn sufficient rest for lips and lungs, and to teach players who were accustomed to 'solos,' with a popping, punctuating accompaniment of , to realise that every one's part was a melody, and that they had to sing squarely into their instruments instead of letting them off like guns.

The way in which these facts were grasped, and the really formidable difficulties of the score tackled, was a lesson to me in what the love of music can accomplish in the way of patient, earnest effort. I will not say that perfection was ever reached, because spring surprised us at our work, and the sprouting and blossoming of things made us all faithless to indoor tasks. But there were often long passages of twenty or thirty bars when nothing went wrong, when the stick could swing noiselessly

in the air without the arresting *rat-tat* that meant a wrong note somewhere in the tenor horns, when the two great B-flat bombardons, much to their own surprise, sighed and hummed their melodious bass beside me, and the cornets, the assurance for once knocked out of them by the difficulties of phrasing, forbore to sound too loudly. My great stand-by (in other things as well as in music) was the euphonium; whoever else was wrong, the euphonium was right, nor shall I ever forget the comforting assurance of his entry (twelve bars before Walther's '*Verweilt! ein Wort!*') with



nor his puzzled frown (and the ill-concealed joy of his apprentice, the second tenor-horn) if by any chance he did make a slip.

There was a great hawthorn-tree outside the schoolroom windows, and as our rehearsals went on it slowly changed from black to peppered grey, to green, to pink; and often when things were going well, and the lamplight flickered on the weathered faces, all intent on their music, my thoughts would escape from those walls into some dreaming world of sounds and everlasting hawthorn scents—to the world in which Eva and Sachs, and all bright and lovely things have place; where the fleeting moments that are all our portion are eternities, and where spring pauses for ever on the threshold of May.

And one evening I saw that the hawthorn-tree was all blood-red in the sunset, and knew that our faltering notes might come to their cadence.

IV

In a dell of the great southern promontory of England a girl was singing before a farm cottage. Her skin was warmed and mellowed by an Italian sun, and amid the green and gold that is the livery of spring upon the Lizard the gaudy dyes of her clothing shone with a foreign and startling brightness. She might have dropped from the sky; she was like an elf or a sprite, something that belonged to a festival and had flown and perched here for some bright reason. Asked her name, she said 'Filomèna Paggétti,' with the long drawling vowels, full of a kind of whining laughter, that she had learned in the streets of Rome. She was going to Helston to play—*suonanne a l'Elstonne, alla festa.* That was on the afternoon before Flora Day; and although she was ten miles from Helston she still sang on before the cottage by the sea.

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Long, long ago, when men thought less and felt more, the coming of spring in England was greeted by a festival of the goddess Flora; and not so long ago as that, though still very far from us, in what is sometimes called the dark night of

superstition, and may be called the golden day of imagination, a fiery dragon flew over the town of Helston and hovered there to the terror of the inhabitants. At last, by the mercy of God it fell into the Atlantic at the Looe Pool; and upon the eighth of May the people of Helston, being greatly relieved in their minds at its departure, brought forth flowers and green branches, and made music so sweet that they could not keep from dancing to it. They danced in and out of the houses and all through the town, and so spread their gladness through every household. Those are the two traditions from which the so-called 'Furry Dance,' which is danced in Helston every year on the eighth of May is traced. Doubtless upon the old Pagan festival a Christian meaning was imposed; doubtless at some time or other the Host was carried in procession in front of the dancing couples; but that has all fallen away, and the festival has become Pagan again — simply a festival of gladness at the coming again of the flowers, the presence of spring, and the promise of summer.

It remains one of the most ancient of English things in England, and in the part of England that is less changed by the modern spirit than any other part. Cornwall is a separate country from the England of which London is the capital; Cornwall has its own capital, its own circles of importance; and as much as Cornwall is detached from London,

so is the Lizard detached from Cornwall. Like most peninsulas, it is a separate country by itself: a country as yet unseamed by the railway and living a primitive and self-contained life with Helston as its capital. From all over the peninsula people make expedition to Helston for marketing and shopping purposes; they never take less than a day for such expeditions, and they are anticipated with enterprise and looked back upon with emotion. So that Flora Day is not the festival of Helston alone, but of a whole country that still sleeps in the quiet and primitive existence of those who till the earth and fish in the sea.

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From whatever part of the peninsula you approach it, the way to Helston on a May morning lies through a land aflame with gorse. From every quarter the coaches and carts come jogging along the roads, laden with happy people, eloquent with happy voices. Where there is not gorse, where the burning bush gives place to cooler hues of growth, there are here and there green meadows, and here and there brown fields just dusted over with a cloud of green where the corn breaks through the earth, and occupied by a marauding army of crows and seagulls. The hedgerows are deep with greenness and all colour: ivy and beech, gorse and thorn; wild orchids and hyacinths, cuckoo's bread-and-cheese, ragged robins, prim-

roses and violets and daisies. It is through these avenues of colour, breathing air laden with salt and honey, that you approach the festival of Flora.

Helston stands at the head of the promontory, a grey, austere little town of ancient stone houses and walled gardens, with brawling streams running in each gutter and streets that lead up to the sky and down to a green valley. But on this Flora-day, although it could not put off its native austerity, it clothed it with a garment of festival gaiety. As you drove in through Meneage Street, you came upon this happy spirit. The chief decoration of the town was green branches; branches of that rare pale greenness that it thrills the senses to catch sight of even in May; and these were disposed in bowers about the doors and stretched forth from windows like flags and banners. The shops were all open, for the shops are at once the ornaments and the excitements of Helston; and everywhere the crowd ebbed and flowed and eddied with a delightful air of holiday. Little booths were erected, at which were sold not only shellfish, but every kind of brightly coloured edible substance. There were hardly any wheeled vehicles in the town; there was no room for them; the people filled the streets, and all day long there was that pleasantest of sounds that can be heard in a town—the hum of human voices and the tread and murmur of human feet. Filomèna was there,

with certain others from her distant country, moving about like flames in the Cornish crowd. As the morning wore on the people packed themselves in a good-natured congestion before the Town Hall, where the Furry Dance was to be started. There were very few policemen, and they were quite inadequate to deal with the crowd, had it needed to be dealt with; but it did not. It was the happiest and best-natured crowd that you could wish to be in. It did not come to grumble or to be unhappy, or to get value for its money, or to be able to say it had been there, or to work itself into excitement, or to do any of the other disagreeable things that crowds do; it had come, like Filomèna, from Rome, *suonanne, a l'Elstonne, alla festa.*

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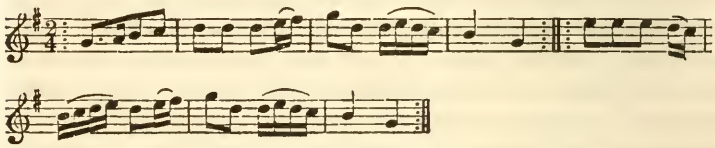
Soon after twelve o'clock had struck the strains of a band within the Town Hall announced the setting forth of the Furry Dancers. There are several of these dances during the day, in parties of about twenty, which perambulate the town. There is the 'Slavey's Dance,' which starts at six in the morning; and there is this, the principal one, at twelve o'clock, which is known as the 'Quality Dance.' The booming of a drum, that inspiring clamour, announced the coming of the dancers; and presently they came, headed by four policemen and the band. The tune of the 'Furry Dance' is traditional, and consists only of two measures,

which are repeated all day long by the band, with much invention and counterpoint and sportive canon and imitation on the part of those low comedians of the band, the bombardon and euphonium. This is the tune :—



Behind the band come the couples ; the men in tall hats and frock-coats—a costume that seems to a contemporary rather lamentable, but will doubtless seem very quaint and picturesque a hundred years hence—the women in all the finery that spring can suggest and fashion imagine. The dance consists of the ordinary turn, varied at the second measure of the tune by the couples exchanging partners down the line of the procession, so that they are continually melting into each other—a charming effect if the woman are dressed in various colours. The band and policemen plunged headlong into a house, the long procession of couples followed them, dancing ; and in a moment the blare and throb of the band broke out again as it emerged through another door, followed by the couples, still briskly dancing. This was the beginning of a triumphal progress of about an hour and a half through the principal streets of the

town, and in and out of the principal houses; when the couples were absolutely tired they walked for a little while, but never for very long at a time; and you would see the sedate and decorous line of men and women waving and jigging and circling again as the dance broke out afresh.

And all over the town went this measure of music of eight bars; all day long you could hear it; you were always liable to meet it turning the corner of a street, and have to give way before it or stand aside to let it pass; and it became identified with all the sound and movement of the day, getting into the pulses and the blood so that every one, little boys and old men, momentarily desiring to sing or whistle any stave, invariably broke into the tune of the Furry Dance. It hovered like a dim cloud of sound or atmosphere over the town all day and became identified to the senses with the pleasant odour of paregoric and cocoanut from the little stalls and booths. And through it all, at home in the sunshine and happy atmosphere, wandered Filomèna and wove her bright thread of alien song.

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Nothing in our day can be happier or brighter or more natural than this ancient festival of Flora at Helston. England has grown either very sober or very self-conscious in her pleasures; they are either stiff or sad, or else over-elaborate and feverish; or they are of that laborious kind that

has given rise to the saying, 'to make a toil of a pleasure,' If Helston were two hundred miles further East, some well-meaning busybody would have got hold of Flora Day and organized it and costumed it according to the strictest antiquarian knowledge; and would have taken all the heart out of it. In Helston they are not archæologically correct; you could not put their little festival on the stage; it would be laughed at for its incongruities and anachronisms. Yet there it is, with the true root and essence of it remaining from the distant past; founded on nothing more complicated than the joy that rises in simple hearts at the sight of earth breaking forth again into the glory of summer. The glory is transient, but the joy is eternal; and it is an eternal thing that links every eighth of May in Helston with the Pagan and Christian past, and the joy that men felt long ago in Cornwall when they saw the gorse aflame and the young grass gemmed and starred with colour.

SUMMER

Saint Just-in-Roseland means to me an enenchanted summer day, and a piece of the world that can never really be revisited, but lived and died for me the first time I saw it. Saint Just-in-Roseland is in Falmouth Harbour, or rather at

the junction of the Falmouth and Truro waters; and Falmouth Harbour is one of England's wasted opportunities, or, say, one of her neglected privileges. It is more beautiful than anything within the same radius of London; its climate is mild and temperate; and in the winter even warm; the town has its own character and preserves its old customs; while those who care to look can find in the almost infinite acreage of sheltered tidal waters other worlds whose discovery will delightfully employ them for weeks together. The town, which rises straight from the water's edge so that bow windows and warehouse doors overhang the clear green water, has a quality rare in English towns; if you were drawing it you would draw it in perpendicular rather than in horizontal lines. The houses are tall and narrow, and rise from the sea like the houses of Savona or Genoa; and a block of building which in any other place would seem to be composed of four horizontal rows of ten windows each, seems somehow in Falmouth to be composed of ten vertical strips four windows in height. I do not know what makes people live thus in the vertical rather than in the horizontal slices of houses, in towers rather than in flats; I would fain believe that it is the desire to look out to sea and observe what is going on in the harbour. For everything in Falmouth is concerned with the sea; streets end in the water, public steps continually go down into

the sea, all the windows look across the harbour. The one long main street of the town is divided from the sea only by a slice of buildings one house deep; and the shore takes a great curve, with the agreeable result that the quickest way to get from one end of the street to the other is by water.

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But the town of Falmouth is only a result and appendage of the spreading waters that lie so calmly there and penetrate so far inland among the woods and pastures and cornfields. There are a hundred creeks and inlets to explore, and although you may start sailing up the great broad waterway that ultimately leads to Truro, you will never, if you are a person with any love of navigation, get there on one tide. On either side creeks and inlets invite you to explore. You turn aside, and as your boat or launch opens up the miniature headlands and shores of the creek you see yet another smaller creek opening off it. Down goes your helm, and you swing round over a little sandy bar and past brown banks of seaweed into the clear deep water of this new channel. The shores, steeply clothed with oak or elm, press closer together; there is no sound but the soft ripple of the incoming tide, the pulsing of your launch, with perhaps the long jar of a reaping-machine waxing and waning on the land high above your head. You steer up on the

tip-toe of expectation; you round a point and open out a new bend; and there on your beam you see another creek, with its little cottage and quay by the point, and its boat, which is a prisoner there except at high tide, moored off the cottage garden. Round you go again with your engines eased down and an anxious look ahead for shallows and sea-weeds; the current ripples suspiciously on the sandy bar; but you find a channel, and just graze your keel over the smooth sand, and you are in deep water again. You have thus been going round in a circle, or turning continually at a right-angle; you lose all sense of direction or wish to follow your original course, and you haunt this succession of enchanted waters until the turning tide warns you that you must retrace your tortuous course, go back over the bars and round the points until you are back in the great roadstead again.

* * *

I was playing this game of discovery one afternoon, and turning suddenly out of the windy freshness of deep blue waters I rounded a headland, ran between sandy narrows, scraped round a marking-post, and found my launch heading straight for a churchyard wall in the deep green shade and stillness of giant elms. As the engine ceased its song there fell a great silence and stillness, like an enchantment. The sound of the sea outside sank

from a roar to a murmur, from a murmur into silence; the rippled water became a smooth glassy sheet on which the bubbles did not even break; the sunlight fell to gloom.

I left my boat with its nose resting on the shingle, and found myself in a very ancient precinct that bears the beautiful name of St. Just-in-Roseland—a place of great age and peace and happy deserted dignity, where the land and the trees rise steeply up and overshadow the church, so that the ancient graves appear one above the other, as though they were terraced half-way up to the sky. There was not a sound. A cable's-length away there were white horses and rushing tides and the noise of wind and waves; here there was nothing but stillness and green filtered twilight and the emblems of age and death.

I walked up the road that leads among the trees to the inland world beyond. Suddenly round a corner there appeared the little camp of a Boys' Brigade, on the point of taking tea; and there was a curate there with a very red, earnest hot face, arguing with another man as to whether it would be better to make the tea very strong and then add a great deal of water to it, or make it the right strength at first. It was a sudden glimpse as I turned the corner—the rows of little boys with their tin cans and their dummy guns, and the hot earnest curate; and as I went on the voices sank almost as quickly as the scene faded, and I was

back in stillness and enchantment again. Now the church was below me, and I was looking down on the top of its roof and tower; far below that I could see between the trees the green glint of water and the ensign at the stern of my boat; but the road still went up. I followed it no further than to a point at which I could see above the tree-tops the sharp blue line of the far-away sea horizon; but I believe that the road winds up far higher than that and goes on into an enchanted world, and comes to other harbours and other gardens and other places of sea-brightness and tree-shadow.

It is better to believe that it is so than to know that it is not so. I stayed a long time at this Pisgah view, looking over the tree-tops to the remote line of the sea, where the breezes drowsed in the golden sunshine, and where there was nothing that was not great and far away and eternal. . . . I stayed so long that before I began to descend the sun was low, and his rays seemed to be striking horizontally between the trees of that high world.

I came down the winding road in the stillness towards my boat; and as I turned the corner I again came upon the curate. The little boys had shouldered their dummy guns and marched off with fifes to their camp; but the curate was still talking to the man who had helped him with the tea. As I passed the corner his words were the

only thing in the world that one could hear. . . . 'Yes, but if we had first made the tea very strong, and then poured a little into each cup, and then carried the water round separately, we should have managed it better. . . .'

AUTUMN

As the year turns the corner and the harvests are garnered and days grow shorter and sadder, the thick clinging sea mists come back to hang about the brows of the Lizard for days and nights together. It is then that the fog-signal bellows incessantly and mournfully, and in the deep silence of the air the sirens and horns of ocean steamers sound their long melancholy notes—now deep and vibrating, now short and inquiring, now in the agonised wail of the siren, now in low resonant harmonic chords, in which the 6–3 and 6–4 major triads predominate. It is then that the coxswain of the lifeboat sees to his gear, and the idle fisherman haunts the cliffs, and the coastguard men listen and peer incessantly from their little shelter on the bluff.

The sound of a gun at ten o'clock at night has only one meaning on the Cornish coast; it carries far inland, across the wet misty fields and farmsteads, news of danger or disaster at sea. On a night of my autumn it came unexpectedly; there was no gale, although it was blowing fairly hard from the west, with driving sheets of thick mist

and rain; there was no sea to speak of, and the powerful light and foghorn on the Lizard have made wrecks of recent years few and far between. People were sitting in the soft lamplight at their evening occupations when the dull report and flight of the rocket into the misty night startled every one to attention, and, along with the instinct to rush forth and render assistance, awoke the old wrecking spirit also. The men in the village up on the cliff threw down what they were doing and ran out into the night, down towards the Cove, while the women gathered together and began to discuss the chances of a general cargo.

* * *

The lifeboat was soon manned and run down to the Cove, and it put off into the mist towards the rocks where the shadowy outline of a great three-masted sailing ship was visible. She was a French barque, outward bound from Cherbourg to San Francisco; instead of going past the Lizard she had found herself close ashore on the wrong side of it; she had tried to wear round in order to get to sea again, but room had been wanting. The coast-guard on the look-out on the cliffs above our Cove had seen first her port and then her starboard light close under him as she swung round; he had even been able to hail her and to hear the reply, so close was she under the cliffs, and she glided on like a phantom a cable's length further before taking the

ground, with a jar and grind of iron plates, on a sharp reef close under the land. There she now lay in the dim mist and driving rain—merely a gigantic looming shadow of sails and spars, but offering to the sea-trained eye a dreadful impropriety in the closeness of those towering masts to the cliffs. There was a confusion of shouting on board, running to and fro, waving of dim lights, all pervaded by the frantic barking of a dog.

The Frenchmen made a half-hearted attempt to get out an anchor and warp her off; but she was fixed hard and fast, and they were afraid that she would capsize. Three trips of the lifeboat, and her crew of twenty-seven were all brought off; the captain came last with his papers and the ship's money; and there she lay in the early morning light—a new ship, beautifully rigged, provisioned for a long voyage, but wrecked and abandoned.

* * *

It was after this that the old Cornish spirit broke out and seized the whole of the inhabitants of the little fishing-cove. To their bitter disappointment she turned out to be laden with cement in casks; her decks were awash at high water, the seas were breaking over them, and the casks of cement had been turned into so many stones. But at low water the wrecking began. There was nominally a party of salvers acting for the Insurance Company, and of course there were

the coastguards to keep an eye on the dutiable stores; but the same spirit was over all. Some kind of order prevailed on the first day, when all the cabin fittings, the tables and beds and chairs, the teak doors and the brass fittings, carpets, cushions, lamps and such things were torn out of the cabins and brought ashore. But the next day the lust of destruction and of wreckage took frantic possession of the population. As soon as the water had left her decks we settled upon her like vultures on a carcase, tearing down and smashing open doors, partitions and cases—nominally with the idea of salving the valuable contents of the ship, but actually in obedience to a very ancient and deep-rooted instinct to seize what the sea had given us and to destroy what we could not seize and take away. Beautiful polished doors and woodwork that fitters and cabinet-makers had toiled over were attacked with the fisherman's axe. In the after part of the ship, where the officers' stores were, the scene was one of infernal destruction and activity. The salt water was washing about on the carpet on one side of the tilted cabin; cases of food and wine were one after another being hauled out of the stores and smashed open; boxes of eggs lay broached with the contents spread in a slippery mass on the floor; great casks and flasks of red wine had been smashed open, and the wreckers were wading about in wine while they were knocking the heads off bottles and drinking the contents.

Case after case of biscuits, tinned meats, bottled and preserved dainties, chocolate, cheeses, vegetables, were all attacked, and their contents mingled with the slush of eggs and wine on the floor.

The wreckers, inflamed and confounded by the sight of so much food and drink, could hardly pause in their work of destruction to sample the loot; and in the presence of so much plenty and variety they did not know what to attack first. Up on deck you would meet a man gnawing a Dutch cheese with a half-empty bottle of wine in one hand, his mouth smeared over with chocolate from the sodden packet in his pocket, under his arm, perhaps, a box of raisins or plums, and in his pockets tins of meat and vegetables. A pig was found miserably grunting in one of the alley-ways; it was instantly slaughtered; and its blood mingled with the contents of the floor, so that the cabin ran with blood and wine and butter. Splintered glass lay all over the floor; drawers were torn out, smashed with a blow of the axe, and their contents scattered; and down below, where the brass-bound stairways led into rooms ceiling-deep in salt water, there were more treasures of food and drink, which the more adventurous sought to fish up and broach.

Of course this was only one side of the wrecking activities. Up on deck the axe and the screw-driver were also busy, beginning the slow work of destruction. Brasswork and ironwork, blocks and tackles were being slowly collected; while up

above, the mighty fabric of masts and yards and rigging stood in the sun, staunch and undamaged, and the unlowered topsails cracked and flapped in the breeze. Then the underwriters' agents came down, and the activities of the wreckers were necessarily abated a little, but in the moonlight their little boats crept back to the wreck and began to gnaw again at her vitals.

We were all the same; the preventive officers, who went to prevent, remained to assist; every one was rushing about looking for something useful or interesting for himself. I was moderate—only because I was late; I only got an oak bucket, some brass hooks and earrings, a brass lock, a curiously fashioned French wooden water-scoop, a part of a captain's rough log-book, a letter from a French cook asking for an engagement on board, a cork jacket, a half-drowned kitten, a paint-scraper, an earthenware pot, a brass lamp-shade, a ball of tarred cord, two knives, a shark-hook, and perhaps one or two other matters. . . . . And many things that have for long swung over the surges, and creaked and flapped in gales about the Cape of Storms, are resting now, amazed, surely, and stunned by the stillness, in the peace of Cornish gardens.

WINTER

And after the wreck there came upon us the long trance that lies between the last life of autumn and the seeming death of winter.

It is a curious season; I have watched it ebb and flow from October till March, and found no moment until the very end of January in which one could truly say, 'this is winter.' Although it may be cold and frosty in the heart of England, and trains may be pushing their way through snow-drifts on the borders of Scotland, there will almost certainly be a kind of faint summer lingering by the Cornish seashore that is in utter contrast to the rigours of the north.

From the sleet and cold of London I have returned to Cornwall even in mid-December, and found it still late summer in the gardens and lanes tucked away in the valleys that run down to the sea. The summer flowers—pansies, stocks, heliotrope, roses, nasturtium, geranium—were still making the borders bright, and still being cut for the house; the honeysuckle still hung its flowering boughs from the hedges, and periwinkle gemmed the damp, and ragged robin the dry banks. And I remembered with a new wonder how mild a thing winter may be down there in the grey quiet of the stony headlands, and how much more genial than the searching, dusty cold of the winds that often belie the brilliant sunshine of those distant coasts to which English people repair for warmth in winter.

Perhaps, from our dull climate the cold sunshine of the Mediterranean shores is a better change than the misty mildness of Cornwall; perhaps it is

brightness and colour more than warmth that our sun-starved senses need. For in spite of the late and early flowers, the colour of a Cornish November is sad and low in tone. If you take the night sleeping-car train from Paddington and wake up on a sunny morning somewhere west of Truro, your first sensation, it is true, will be one of colour —a tender glow that seems to lie over the land and be reflected in the clouds. It comes partly from the colour of the turned earth, and partly from the great stretches of downs where the heather and the gorse blend into a kind of faint golden mauve; but the eye soon becomes used to it, and forgets to remember that it is colour at all. After that, although in the short hours of sunshine the whole world seems sprinkled with the gold of the gorse, it is bright colour that the eye chiefly craves—the reds and blues that are the glory of the Mediterranean shore, but of which Nature is all too sparing in Cornwall.

* * *

Perhaps the most melancholy thing about a typical Cornish winter day is its stillness. If you are near the sea, that great continuous voice will keep its overtones hanging in the empty air until the ear ceases to be aware of it, or accepts it as the equivalent of silence. Very few birds are singing; the twittering of the robins is, like the sea, so con-

tinuous that it also is regarded as part of the silence; and the sounds of human occupation are few and faint. There is such a sense of everything having come to a pause or stop that the mind too gets weary and drowses into the winter sleep of the world. The hypnotism of the wide songless skies, the empty unliving fields, the deserted road, the listless sea, creeps about the human heart and lays a weight upon the eyelids of the soul. Men and women in these parts talk less, work less, think less, love less, hate less than they talk and work and think and love and hate in summer; for they are nearer the sun than any one else in England, and in his absence the business of their lives seems to pause, and they themselves, sheltering from the winds and storms, merely to await his coming again.

For it is not all silence and flowers in the Cornish winter; there are days of shaking wind as there are days of white sea mists that come rolling in from the Atlantic and hang for a week at a time about the promontory, so that the silent air becomes filled with the hollow, melancholy notes of foghorns. And when the wind gets up in earnest, how it moans and sighs and screams in the wide chimneys! To be on the Lizard in a winter gale is like being on the roof of a house in a storm; the wind is all about you, and on every side are the noises of the wind and of the sea. Then indeed you think there will never be silence again, never peace again, never sun nor summer again, until

your ears grow weary with the crying voices of the storm, and the rumbling in the chimney sounds like the muffled thunder of guns.

And then, perhaps the very next morning, you wake once more to the deep silence, the faint sunshine, the mild sweet air, the stillness by land and sea. If the sky be blue and cloudless and the wind at rest, there will be for a few morning hours a sense of life, of expanding, growing warmth that sometimes cheats the very flowers so that they open and blossom again. But towards afternoon the gold and the mauve fade from the landscape and the greyness falls again—the greyness that is winter, that is England, that is everyday life and work in this world. And in the greyness glows here and there a little lamp of colour, something that is all joy and contentment because it refuses to be suppressed by the greyness—blue of the periwinkle, red of the ragged robin, honey of the honeysuckle, violet of the violet; and you remember, as the short day fades, that spring once was and will be again, continually, unfailingly, while time lasts.

* * *

All through the winter I watched the sleep of the village, from its drowsy beginnings in the late autumn, when the last of the summer visitors had fled and the burst of autumn growth in hedgerow and garden was over, through the darkness and

silence of midwinter, when the very earth seemed to have ceased to breathe, to the stiff awakening in the chills of March. I saw the ebb of life; the sun dipping day by day a little earlier, a little further round through the bare trees towards the sea, day by day it, and all bright things with it, a little farther from me; I watched the fields holding out against the cold rains, day by day less able to throw them back to the remote sun, until the day came when they lay fairly under water, to be fields no more, but mud and ooze or cold frosty iron until the tide of life should turn again. I listened to the winds that began with a sad song in the autumn, and rose through shaking gales and hurricanes to a Sabbath of wild commotion in desolate January, until my ears ached with their crying and my brain was tired with their brushing, and the four-foot stone walls of the house were shaken with their weight. And I saw the daylight ebb, ever poorer in quality and shorter in measure, until the world was in darkness at four o'clock in the afternoon, and the days were short rifts in the permanent night. And all this time I hardly spoke to any one, because there was hardly any one to speak to.

There was near my village no great house with a busy and elaborate festivity of winter life; to find that one must drive twelve cold miles, and perhaps feel a solitary at the end. My fellow-prisoners, the labourers and peasant farmers, to

whom I would willingly have talked, did not much care to talk to me, or perhaps to any one. Talk, interchange of ideas, was not a necessity with them; they talked to me in summer, but not in winter, which hypnotised them into silence, into a rhythmic alternation between going out and getting cold, and coming in and getting warm. Their imagination and their social needs were fed on Sundays from the chapels, out of which they drew a store of courage to last them through the week; but I had stored nothing in church or chapel, and could have drawn nothing out. A strange, gloomy race, with Wesleyanism grafted on to Celticism, smugness sometimes joined to melancholy, mistrust and suspicion of a larger world woven into their ignorance of it, little use could they have for dreams or ideas, weathering out their wild winters here amid the Atlantic storms.

* * *

When the rain dripped all day long in the village road and nothing moved except here and there a human figure, bent, comfortless, gathered together against the weather, the few men of the village worked heavily in forge or barn or workshop. The women, happily bound to their indoor routine, cooked and cleaned and tidied, tidied, cleaned, and cooked from hour to hour. Indoors they talked of the weather, and of rain or wind

that forced a way into the houses; they dodged the draughts, and battened everything down, like mariners caught in a storm. The weekly butcher, leaving a trail of contentment or anger, according to the amount of bone and other inedible substances he was able to combine with the dole of red meat; the bi-weekly 'bus, visiting the town ten miles away and returning with news and with parcels; the prayer-meetings and services, at which the same faces looked on each other week after week, year after year, no nearer intimacy, no nearer kindness—these marked the passage of the days for most of us. The loom of Education worked drowsily in the village school, where in a steaming atmosphere of wet clothes and muddy boots, unwashed little bodies were drilled and exercised, and to dull, unamazed little minds it was explained that four times eight were thirty-two, that the earth was Round like an Orange, and that William Rufus 'was' ten-eighty-seven. You could hear them, as you passed the infant school, reciting and asserting these, and sometimes more incredible things: above the December gale the voices would rise in a shrill chorus asserting that they—*i.e.*, little Tom Willey, aged five, little Myra Tomkins, age four, little Richard this and Bertha that—believed in the Communion of Saints.

It is a strange atmosphere in which to try to do work of the mind; strangely unreal and dream-

like, strangely unconscious, inarticulate; moving somewhither of a certainty, though seeming never to move while you look at it, like a cloud in a windless sky. It hypnotises the mind that would be active; the effort to think and not to dream is constant. In silence you rise and dress, take a look at the weather, breakfast; in silence—the silence of a dream—you go to your desk and make the daily effort to project out of your own mind another world, other people, more real than these; in silence you register the daily triumph or defeat, and go out to some out-of-door occupation. Perhaps you have to speak to the carpenter about a piece of wood; you look forward to it, there is a little sense of excitement, of mingling in affairs; and you wonder if the carpenter realises how sorry you are when it is over. Perhaps there is a ride over the desolate downs in wind and rain; and in that case there is the pleasure afterwards of seeing the pony made comfortable in his stable. The wind howls outside, but it is warm there; the golden straw rustles pleasantly underfoot, the hay, sweet still with the memory of upland meadows, fills the air with fragrance; eager sounds herald the production of mangels and oats. You are tempted to linger there in the gathering darkness where the sounds of munching tell you that something is happy because of your act and deed, some one is tasting contentment in that he is safe sheltered from the sleet, is warmed

and fed, and will pleasantly doze the long night away.

Silently you return to the indoor life—seven dark hours till bed-time; the logs sizzling on the fire, the dog, your only intimate in these solitudes, pricking an ear at the rumbling wind in the chimney—voice of that other big dog who will never come down and fight; and the real world of books, of things written and imagined, that makes your hibernation endurable. And the last thing at night you go out again and look at the sky. In such a place, where the daily routine is so exact, you hardly measure time by days or hours, but the moon is your clock, and your hours are a month long—a month of four quarters—waxing, waning, full and change. The wisp of new moon means always hope in the weather—always unfulfilled; the full moon sailing high in a stormy sky carries with it I know not what of admonition, of desolation, of sense of destiny. Another moon: and you remember in what distant places and different scenes you have looked on that mysterious cold face, and think of those far distant on whom it is now looking down, and wonder where and in what circumstances you will be, and what you will have accomplished when it greets you again. Another moon: a mysterious, unfriendly monitor: a dead thing that will outstay all life, and at last look down on a universe of dead things.

* * *

And then without warning came that first faint thrill that comes to all living things in our northern world and finds them out wherever they may be—the turn of the tide. A sudden remembrance that the sun gives heat as well as light, a curious shining of the wet fields, a change in the note of birds, and you knew that the great machinery had not paused or gone wrong, and that the pulse of life was returning to your world. Tops came in, and the tray of marbles was withdrawn from the window of the village shop: the tide had risen high enough to reach the little hearts nearest the earth. Village youths, in companies of fours and fives for better protection against the wiles of maidens, began to take walks on Sunday: it had reached to their hearts, too. It touched the gardens, and adventurous householders began to scrape the earth to free the tips of shooting bulbs; it reached the houses, and furniture and mats were brought out for an airing; it penetrated to the inmost recesses of the hearth, and old men and women who had sat fast in the warmth and shelter all winter, went to the doors and took their first lungful of pure air, like bees on their cleansing flight.

Gloriously the flood came on; and as the groundsel seeded and the dandelion flowered the birds began to be busy, and the instinct to build something took possession of the village. In the carpenter's shed stacks of pine boards were conspicuously displayed. The schoolmaster was build-

ing a hen-house, the postmaster was building a cupboard, the jobmaster was building a wall, I had a new window opened, and the doctor began to talk of pulling his house down and building another a hundred yards away. And those who, exhausted by the winter, were to die in the spring, died then in that first thrilling draught of new life, washed from their feeble hold by the first impulse of the tide; and as the sunset reddened over the churchyard trees were sung to their sleep in the quick and generating earth.

* * *

In all this renewal the sea alone had no place. It seemed to scrutinise the changing earth with a melancholy interest, as though shut out from some ceremony in which it would fain have taken a part; and its waves, that had been incessantly alive and active through the winter, seemed suddenly to have fallen dead along the awakening shore. For by the sea, and there only, spring smiles a little sadly; and although the poet wrote of buds and flowers opening to sorrow, and of the secret grief in the nightingale's cadence, it was the spirit of the sea that spoke in his song: *Ernst ist der Frühling.*

III

BYWAYS OF A WAR

BYWAYS OF A WAR

TIME levels all experience if only we wait long enough, reducing our mountains to molehills, filling graves that once yawned achingly, making deep waters shallow, softening harsh experience and wiping memory clean of unimportant details. But amid the silting and levelling, some things which in their own time were counted as trifling emerge and refuse to be wiped out, appearing in the new proportions of retrospect as essential features in the pictures we make of things gone by. A war correspondent on the field, concerned with the business of battles and military manœuvres, ought to ignore everything but news; still, if he be fortunate to plunge as a novice into the red whirl his mind will almost certainly be busy on its own account, saving up and laying by and recording, until, out of the mere overflow and waste of material in a vast human exchange, it will have amassed a small fortune of experience, a treasure of bright pictures to be taken out and looked at when duller and less strenuous days need beguiling. Some of these pictures I have tried to reproduce

here; they are not all pleasant, but they are all from life.

I

THE HARVESTERS

Between the noise of battle and the half-column of type in your morning paper that set forth its barest incidents lay a seven-thousand mile chain of many links. The news from 'our special correspondent' looked very simple as you read it beneath the familiar heading, and if you thought about the source at all I dare say you had a vision of some one handing in the message at a telegraph office 'somewhere at the front.' But the message had a strange history and many a changing process to pass through before it came under your eyes in clean black type. It was born amid noise and commotion, amid life and pain and laughter and death. The scraps of information of which it was made up—what efforts some of them cost in the collecting! This line, stating that 'Colonel A.'s squadron was holding a small kopje on the left under a galling cross-fire' perhaps meant a four-mile ride under a broiling sun and an occasional dropping bullet; that sentence computing the enemy's loss at 'more than double' those of our own force meant an hour's hanging about outside headquarters until a staff officer had finished his dinner; that description of the enemy's method of getting his heavy gun removed in the nick of time

to avoid recapture meant, perhaps, a long and patient conversation with a stupid Kaffir; while the important news that 'the Boers were thoroughly dispirited and sick of the war' cost two tins of sardines and an exchange of tobacco with a sullen prisoner.

Then the message had to be trimmed and hacked by a wary press censor, and perhaps carried by a tired horse and a tired rider across thirty miles of veldt, only to be added to a pile of some fifty similar messages, with which it vanished from its author's gaze through the telegraphist's window. The magic 'R. T. P., full rates' carried it without money and without price over hundreds of miles of land wires, through many offices where perspiring operators received and transmitted its quickly-ageing news, until the last tired clerk had clicked out its last dot and dash, the last bored censor had read it, and it thrilled away over the red slime of the ocean bed, obliterated for the fraction of a second, coming to life again in a neat little white-washed telegraph station on the English seashore, appearing in written words again on the compositor's lamp-lit case, in the new metal of the foundry, in 'slip,' in page, and at last in your paper—a day late. Perhaps there were a hundred words in it, and it probably cost the paper as many pounds; but because some fagged-out operator decided to 'block' his instrument for the night just before, instead of just after, it had been sent, all that outlay was wasted.

News is the most perishable of the things we buy and sell. It is no sooner born than it begins to die; time is against it from the first; space is nothing, but time is an ocean roaring between the war correspondent and his public. It is not miles, but hours that divide them; and the mahogany counter between the writer of the dispatch and the telegraph is a greater obstacle than the Atlantic Ocean. Your message may take longer to cross those six inches of wood than it will take to cross five hundred million inches of ocean cable; the one journey may take a few seconds, but from cable-end to cable-end is less than the wink of a swallow's eye.

* * *

But if there is one romance of the transmission of news, there is another of its collection on the battlefield. That field has but one harvest for the war correspondent; victory or defeat are secondary considerations with him, except in so far as they affect telegraphic communication. He is there to look on, and he must try to banish everything from his mind that interferes with or colours the significance of what he sees. And how little he sometimes sees! The South African War was strangely divided. On the Natal side it was spectacular, tremendous; all the correspondents on that side described battles in terms suggestive of wide views, stirring scenes, day-long acoustic splendours. That

was the hill country, where there were wide views and tremendous echoes. On the western side it was different. The flat table-lands there afforded few vantages from which the whole of a day's fighting could be observed and mapped out; there the onlooker had to be down on the levels. If he was in a safe place he could see nothing; if he was in a good place for looking on he was under fire. Battles were not big spectacles on those wide, rolling plains; for one thing, they extended over great stretches of ground, perhaps fourteen miles wide; and then—there was nothing to be seen.

Sometimes there was nothing even to be heard. You might lie on the grass in the very midst of a big fight, when one of the strange lulls that punctuate battles had taken the place of the crackling of musketry, and try to believe that forty thousand men were trying to kill each other around you. No movement, nothing to be heard but the drone of a locust or the noise of a horse cropping the grass; nothing to be seen but miles of rolling, grey-green veldt sleeping in the sunshine. Then a bullet would fly piping overhead, and gradually the crackling and booming would begin again, now high, now low like some subterranean rumbling, seeming to come from no one quarter, seeming to pervade the whole world. That noise was like an element; it was as if the particles of the air were rubbing and grinding together, as if what had been viewless were about to

become solid and visible, and were now groaning in the very act of transformation.

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Out of such an experience as this the war correspondent must construct his minutely exact telegrams. To a man possessed of the least imagination, it seems an absurdly unpractical thing to come down to describing how 'such and such a battalion was moved to this or that position'; it simply does not describe the thing. There are only two ways of being 'in' a battle. You may be in the firing line of one regiment of one brigade of one division; then you see strange and thrilling sights, but their relation to the whole is infinitely small. Or you may be away from the firing line, wandering about in the empty background between supports and reserves; then you see nothing in detail, but you are in the real atmosphere of the battle as an expression of one man's brain set against another's. In the nearer view men are individuals, each exposed to sickening risks of damage to himself and the little group of human beings who care for him thousands of miles away; in the far view men are pawns, so many to be sacrificed for this end, so many for that. In the near view every wound, every death is a ghastly tragedy; in the distant view these things are robbed of their personal (their only) interest, and

go to swell the tide of advantage or damage that sets towards victory or defeat.

And that, whether one likes it or not, is the true view of a battle, of a war. It is not a succession of incidents; it is a tide, a billow that streams over a country washing out lives as tiny stains are washed out. Human affairs dwindle to nothing under its tread; and it is this weird, enveloping insensibility that baffles men sent to look on thoughtfully at a war.

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The harvesters of news were gathered from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south; they found no city to dwell in; hungry and thirsty—I could go on adapting the psalm of David, but no doubt some of my colleagues would resent a comparison between themselves and a certain rebellious people. Folding borrowed pinions, then, one may drop to earth with the crude statement that they were a very mixed lot. In their ranks were artists, barristers, journalists, adventurers, peers of the realm, ranchers, soldiers, clerks, honourables, and dishonourables, though happily not many of the last. They had many various reasons for being where they were; some sought adventures of the body, some of the mind; some came in search of their reputation, some to escape from it; but they were all, I think, at heart rebellious. Authority

spread huge nets for them into which they were invited to step and be dealt with in bulk as a disagreeable though unavoidable element in the great game. Those who stepped smilingly into the net were exalted, or at least treated with consideration, while those who refused to be netted were brought to confusion—sent down. The thing was to walk into the net, and then to walk out of it through one of its many wide meshes. For in this matter the Army and the Press—good friends on the field, for all that has been written and said—were at variance. The staff officer to whom was entrusted the command of a group of war correspondents saw merely an irregular squadron, to be drilled and manœuvred as a troublesome unit; but to each war correspondent there were always two units in the command—himself, and the other correspondents. What they did, he wished either to do in advance of them or not to do at all; what they failed to do was, within limits, his duty and opportunity.

This was really the right view, approved (when it succeeded) by the editor at home holding magic scales, with a quick eye on Prestige when it sprang upward at a heavy drag from Expense. But the adoption of it created fine situations, when duty swung on a delicate pivot between friend and employer. Hence arose those painful questionings when, having strolled round the camp while your friend and stable companion, though rival in craft,

superintended the ordering of dinner, you stumbled upon an interesting piece of news, and debated within yourself as to whether you ought to share it with him. The sight of him, tired but triumphant over commissariat difficulties, weakened your resolution; the smell of soup extinguished it. To a man who sees sunrise daily from the saddle, and breathes the strenuous atmosphere of rolling tablelands, the credit of newspapers, even though they employ him, dwindles to a small thing, while sense of comradeship and interdependence looms large and instant. Distance lends enchantment to the view even of an editor; he would not have one behave like a churl. So after an awkward silence, in which your friend's exhausted breathing blew up to white heat the coals of fire his domestic industry had heaped on your head, the secret was shared. Thus it was that you read one morning in the *Daily Flail*, under the words, 'from our Special Correspondent': 'A trooper who escaped from the Boer army tells me in confidence that the President was on the field during yesterday's fight, and personally led the assembled commandos in prayer—*evidently an indication that their confidence in the success of their arms is waning*'; while you were told (of course you did not read) that the Special Correspondent of the *Daily Ruse* reported: 'I have private and trustworthy information that the President himself was in command during the fight at Kronicfontein, and that an impressive service held

just before the engagement afforded striking evidence of the *increased determination of the Boers and their absolute confidence in ultimate success.*'

* * *

The collection of news on a modern battlefield gave little opportunity to the war correspondent to 'get ahead' of his fellows; and in South Africa after a big engagement the correspondents used to go all together to the Press Censor, hear his official version of the fight, transcribe it on a telegraph form (with any matter of individual observation added, which the Press Censor generally struck out, having a hazy idea that he was responsible for the facts of the message), and then leave it with the other wires to take its turn at the field telegraph office.

But sometimes, when there were many correspondents and only a single field telegraph line being paid out in the wake of an advancing army, words were limited. One day, I remember, we were only allowed to send ten words each. Now sometimes, when nothing has been happening for several days, the correspondent sends a wire just to show his editor that he is on the spot. On this particular day I could glean no news except that about sixty dead bodies of Boers had been found in a cave in their laager. As it happened at a time when the public appetite for dead Boers was not being supplied fast enough, the news was thought

worth sending. I had ten words. The address of my paper took up two, and I had to sign my name; therefore only seven words remained available. I began light-heartedly.

'About sixty dead Boers discovered cave laager.' I was on my way to the censor when the sense of the thing struck me. It would not do, of course. My editor would think I had gone mad, or was making an unseemly joke about an exploring party of dead Boers. I tried again. 'About sixty Boers found dead in laager.' No, of course not. That would mean that sixty Boers had found some dead men, nationality unknown, in a laager. Another variant gave: 'Soldiers found cave laager sixty Boer dead'; but that might be a double announcement that the British Tommy, thirsty soul, had discovered a cave full of lager beer, and that sixty Boers had been killed—as the result. It was no better to say that 'we discovered sixty Boer dead in laager,' or that 'soldiers found in laager sixty dead Boers'; in either case the idea was equally disagreeable. Dead, and in lager! My head whirled with ideas of flies in amber and mullet in champagne. It was thirsty weather, and I dare say I laid too much stress on the possibility of confusion between 'lager' and 'laager'; but, in any case, what could British soldiers be doing in a cave with sixty dead Boers? I suppose there was some commonsense solution of it, but I have never found it, nor will I ever forget that awful afternoon, with

a nightmare as of all the sixpenny telegrams I had ever tried to send in my life, concentrated in it. Fortunately, the sub-editors of big daily newspapers are men of nerve, and the message duly appeared as I intended it.

* * *

One more, and a more picturesque byway over which a message came from Africa to England. I had gone out with a flying cavalry column which had been detached from Lord Methuen's force. We had marched eastward across the flat plain that stretched from the base of Zwartzkopjes to another hill nineteen miles away. We had a slight engagement, but the enemy were still in our neighbourhood when we encamped at night on the hill, and riding back with a message was not to be thought of, especially as we expected more, and more important, fighting on the next day. The weather was broken and stormy, the sun showing only at intervals; but just before it sank heliographic communication was established with Lord Methuen's headquarters on the hill nineteen miles away. The official message had only been half winked out when the sun went down behind Zwartzkopjes in an angry blaze of purple clouds banked against a smoky sky. We went to dinner, being told that our messages (there were only two correspondents, and we were allowed many privileges) would be sent by the flash lamp after dark. The night set

in wet and windy, and a thunder shower was growling up from the west. When we again clambered up the steep rocky eminence on which the signallers were established, they were trying to pick up with the telescope the answering light nineteen miles across the black void. At last Spyglass saw it and said, 'Right away, Bill.' The man with the lamp began to rattle and bang his shutter that flashed out the Morse code, and at the same time a blaze of lightning divided the darkness. He began again. Now the rules for signallers insist that, if a word is interrupted or not understood, it must be repeated from the beginning, and repeated again until the acknowledging flash is received. The first words of my message were, 'Zwartzkopjesfontein, April 14.' The signaller had got to the second 'z' when the night was again flooded with lightning, thunder roared, and a whole cloudful of rain drove thickly across the veldt. Through it nothing could be seen, and Spyglass searched in vain for the distant light. When the wrath of the storm was past, summer lightning, with which the puny beams of our lamps fenced impotently, drew fairy pictures in the black sky. Seven times was the fell word begun, and seven times interrupted by the sportive elements. But 'steady shakes them,' as the Old Buccaneer said, and for steadiness you will not easily find the match of an army signalling sergeant. It was late that night before we left the hill, but Bill and his mate,

never complaining, had flashed the message, a word edged in here, a letter there, across nineteen miles of storm and rain and thunder and lightning, so that before the sun's guileless face fronted our next day's march the talking instruments and silent wires had taken up its tale, until the sea roared over it and it had touched another continent.

II

THE GREEN CORRESPONDENT

Home six thousand miles away, a ribbon of veldt road losing itself on a bare heaving plain, an indifferent horseman on an unbroken pony; Modder River, with its blinding sandstorms, sickening heat, disease and stagnation, five miles behind; Jacobsdal, as yet unknown, somewhere in front—it was thus that I found myself in a new world, a world burnt up in the fire of an African summer sun. The baked veldt was strewn with ant-heaps, but otherwise it met the sky in an unbroken wave. The road was marked out by tracks of many wheels and hoof-marks; Lord Roberts had passed with his new army. It was also marked at short intervals by brown heaps, where the great foul aasvögels hopped and fluttered, and at each of those heaps there was a tussle to be faced with my pony, who shied at the stench and sight of his dead brothers. To eyes straining forward for a glimpse of the goal,

there was for long no prospect but the bare plain, the near horizon of a ridge waving and shimmering in the heat, and the brown, wing-infested lumps of horror; but at last a white thing caught the sunshine and blazed like a beacon. It became defined as a cluster of houses; a few small trees appeared, then the shape of a village.

Could we get food? The soldiers thronging in the market square laughed derisively. They were living on two biscuits and a lump of meat a day, and the money in their pockets jingled uselessly; there was no soil here for that quick-sprouting seed. Could we get a drink? There was water in the river, and a well in the inn yard, but——'Well, and why not?' said the novice, who had yet to learn, perhaps by experience, that water from a well in a village crowded by twenty times its usual population, was not to be drunk by a foreigner with impunity. A glance round showed the little streets, the little houses, the stables and yards even, to be teeming with brown-clad men, while thousands of oxen, yoked to waggons in the square, bellowed and shuffled and made the air malodorous. Enteric—that hideous name, to be associated with the miseries of a thousand lifetimes—the word was written as though by an invisible finger on the walls of the town; and when I hear the word now, I see the crowded square of Jacobsdal as I saw it on that stifling afternoon in February, with its confusion of troops

and its poisonous dust floating breast-high, and I hear the cries of Kaffirs and of oxen, the sound of thousands of feet dragged wearily through the dust; and memory, like a qualm, restores for a second the sense of helplessness.

* * *

Dusk began to fall, and brought with it a heavenly coolness in the air; lights shone, fires were kindled in the surrounding bivouacs; the hour of feeding was at hand. But for the brotherly act of a stranger I had gone supperless to sleep, and although he could not find me a bed or a shelter, he shared generously with me the gross fare that was so welcome. With my companion I lay down in a field, and spent my first night of campaigning with the stars for a coverlet and a stone for pillow.

I have often done it since, often chosen to do it, but it was all new on that night, and in the memory of those strange, disturbed starlight hours are enshrined all the novelty, the sense of being anchorless, drifting, the knowledge that no help would come from without, the sense of responsibility of problems to be faced, that, I suppose, come to every mind at the first contact with new and different surroundings. The army was reaching forward; I had names—Klip Drift, Klip Kraal, Paardeberg—mere names to me then, as, perhaps, they are to you now, but destined afterwards to

belong each to one of the pictures in my memory. To follow the army along a desert road that stretched indefinitely, where no food could be bought, no rations served out, no telegrams sent—that was the problem that, made monster by the beginnings of a fever, hovered and danced over me throughout the night.

* * *

I lay down like one acting a play; it was hard to believe that one lay on the earth of necessity, and that all my money would not purchase a bed; and I laughed aloud, I remember, when I shut my eyes and tried to go to sleep. Near me my pony, tired out by his waywardness, slept and sighed; wheels rumbled on the road, sentries now and then challenged and were answered. The night was an odd nightmare of the mental conflict I have described, of the multitude of sounds heard with one's ear to the ground, of cocks cheering, of oxen complaining, of men's voices heard far away. Sleep, when it came, was twice interrupted by an alarm that the enemy was threatening the town, once by a warm blast in my face from my pony's nostrils; and always when I awoke it was to the smell of a new land and the thought of to-morrow's difficulties. But all night the air was sweetened and renewed; it was done while we slept, so that waking with the first of dawn I breathed a wonderful new air, cold as the sea, better than wine,

and found that something also had been renewed during the night, and that a new day was not the ugly thing I had believed it.

III

CHEATLE'S BRIDGE

It was made of pontoons and planking, and it stretched over the bend of the river that separated the island from the main camping ground at Modder River. On one side lay acres and miles of sand, softer and deeper than seashore sand above high-water mark, sand in which the feet were engulfed and slipped backwards, and that held the sun's terrible heat until the very touch was scorching. On the other side hung willow and thorn trees, where birds sang; between, the Modder flowed dark and sluggish and secret. On one side thousands of healthy men, and pestilence stalking unchecked amongst them; on the other side, disease and salvation. On one side an army sleeping and eating, toiling, unthinking; on the other side, silence and rest and busy thoughts. On one side the menace of death, on the other the hope of life.

No one who was at the Modder River camp in February, 1900, is likely to forget it. The heat was abnormal even on those gridiron plains; inside a tent the thermometer stood at 130 degrees. The sand was loose and scorching, so that to walk half

a mile in it was a trial of strength. Four times in every hour, on an average, the sand devil arose and played havoc for ten minutes, so that the whole plain was veiled in a thick yellow mist of hot, drifting, blowing sand, that worked its way under tents and into cases until everything a man possessed was coated with it. Ten thousand men lived on that sand, ate there, slept there, washed there, were nursed there; many died and were buried there; and at the intervals I have named the whole surface of the camping-ground was raised into the air and blown about into the drinking water, over the food, into the sick men's mouths. And people at home read in their newspapers that 'the mortality at Modder River camp was not abnormal considering the vast number of men assembled there.' For such was the condition of the Army Medical Department that the appalling sanitary condition of a big camp had to be regarded as normal.

Other armies have portable iron hospitals, which can at least be kept clean; our regulation hospital was then a most efficient pattern of death-trap. A few large marquees or many bell tents were erected on the loose sand; sometimes they had floors, sometimes they had none; always, unless the inmates were to be baked or choked, the fly of the tent had to be kept open. Then the sand devil arose, and deposited a fine layer of sand from the impolite part of the camp all over the floor of the

hospital tents. Wounded men lay on those floors; they choked the sand down their throats, they breathed it into their lungs, they carried it on the finger-tips that touched their bruises, and then, their temperature having risen to the necessary point, they turned over and grunted and died. Meanwhile the Royal Army Medical Corps went about its fell business of ignorant treatment, the worst among its members shirking even that, and voting the whole thing a nuisance, while the best worked like slaves, and wished to Heaven that they could remember what they had learned in the hospitals ten years ago.

* * *

Then one in high command said that the men were dying too fast, that too many were dying of wounds when they ought to be recovering, and that the thing must stop. A troop of civilian physicians and surgeons, very young for the most part, but in dead earnest and with huge appetites for work, entered the camp much to the delight of the good-hearted of the R.A.M.C., and much to the annoyance of the shirkers. With them came a smaller group, men from Cavendish Square and Harley Street and Wimpole Street, who represented the highest medical and surgical efficiency that England could provide; and began in earnest the work of salvation. First-rate hospital trains plied between Modder River and Cape Town, carrying sick and

wounded men away from flies and fevers and stench and starvation; the young civilians joined forces with those of the army surgeons who were doing their best, and things began to look brighter.

But a rifle bullet can damage the human body in many strange ways. It can enter through a wound that looks like a needle's eye, turn somersaults amid the crowded machinery of life, and exit by a torn aperture as large as this page. It can splinter bones so that they grow sound again, it can graze bones so that they perish. It can intrude upon the sanctuary of the skull, ploughing furrows in that hard shell of the mind, and the result of the intrusion may be mere inconvenience, or death, or any of the hundred conditions that lie between. Mistakes were made, and men died who perhaps need not have died.

It was then that a company of sappers began to carry wood and iron and glass across the pontoon bridge above the drift, and in the space of forty-eight hours a hospital was standing under the trees—an excellent hospital, with light, airy wards, an operating-room with large top lights, and many other things proper to a good hospital. Within fifty-six hours from the time at which building began the pontoons were echoing to the stamp of hoofs, the planks of the bridge were creaking under the ambulance wheels, and patients, weary of unskilful treatment or of the weakness preserved by unsanitary conditions, were being borne across

to the new building. Soon the little wards were full, and the operating-room was occupied; soon the business of this little island establishment settled itself into routine, and the stream of health began to circulate.

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The man for whom this little hospital was built and by whose name the pontoon bridge is known in the official nomenclature of the war, was young enough to be an enthusiast, able enough to make his experience serve him instead of years, modest almost to a fault, kind and generous of heart to a degree unusual even in a profession of which kindheartedness and generosity are the hallmarks, liked by his acquaintances, loved by his friends, trusted by his intimates. I shall never forget the days that I spent there, sometimes an onlooker, once or twice a helper in some humble capacity, always fascinated by the air of health and sanity and common sense that hung about the place like a charm.

Over the strip of brown water the sand might be eddying and fogging the plain, the planks of the bridge might crack and blister in the heat, but under the willows were rest and coolness for all who came. Over the water there were wranglings and bickerings and jealousies and disappointments; here things were ordered on a happier plan, and one

clear mind ruled the whole of the tiny colony. There were few sounds save those of our own voices, of the birds, of the gurgling river, and of sleepy ducks quacking under the trees where we tied our horses. True, I have other memories besides those of a peaceful nature. One long afternoon in the operating-room, a dying man sinking away from pain and the world through the eddies of an anæsthetic, the smell of antiseptics, the blows of hammer on chisel—blows calculated to a pennyweight, but seeming as though they must cleave the poor mutilated head—the nice tenderness of the same hand that dealt the blows, cleaning and dressing the bruised member; not a word spoken through that fateful task except short, crisp sentences of command—and behold, a man no longer dying, but struggling through the worlds that divided him from us, swinging back to sight and sound and pain, but awaking at last in the familiar anchorage of the senses, restored to his birthright of health and life. And at last the bridge creaked again when he crossed it, weak but well, to the outer world.

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Many burdens were unbound on the borders of that stream; but the skilful hands and the trained mind could not always prevail; and now and then the bridge received a sufferer who only

crossed it again to be laid in the sand beyond. But even for him, when skill could avail nothing, there was the comfort of a human heart and a brotherly companionship. For such as these the bridge was a stage far towards the journey's end, when the wheels of life, slowing down, gave a moment of preparation for the great change that faces the bravest of us uncertainly beyond one moment of blackness. For others it lay like the rainbow bridge to Valhalla, an avenue to the only benefit craved by their tortured bodies. For most who passed over that bridge found themselves in the world of new things, a quiet place where thought and memory could do their work and readjust the balance of a mind upset by bloody excitement. Thoughts for the unthinking, memories for the forgetful, patience for the fretful, courage for the fearful, hope for the despondent—these were the fruits that fell ripe into the hands of sufferers there and hallowed for them the discipline of pain.

IV

PAARDEBERG

There are two Paardebergs, one of triumphant, one of dreadful memory. Round that outer ring of our enveloping army cheers went up when the pall of grey-green lyddite lifted and revealed a

foe surrendered; and to the glory of having vanquished a stubborn enemy was added the glory of a dreadful heroism that will live so long as a remnant of his race remains. There was glory without and within; and without and within had been hell also.

Try to fix this picture in your mind. The flat, yellow expanse of the veldt is here only relieved by the Paardeberg, or horse's hill, itself, and by a serpentine line of vivid green that twists snakewise to the horizon. Go up to the green line, and you will find it composed of taibosch and mimosa trees that fringe the banks of the Modder. The river you cannot see until you come to the bank, for it flows far below in the wide deep channel it has cut for itself in the sandy soil. At a point near the hillock or kopje (for Paardeberg is nothing more) the river bends sharply, and the green line swells into a little grove. This was the centre of the Boers' position. Go there to-day, and you will find a green sweet spot, where larks and pipits are singing and hovering, merecats standing nibbling in the sunshine, and perhaps, an adventurous party from Kimberley picnicking on a mound that they never dream is a grave. That was the spot where Cronje made his stand, where so many of his comrades fell, where many of his and our comrades sleep, their ears, that last heard the whine of shells, stopped for ever with the brown earth, their eyes filled with the dry, cleansing sand that drifts, and

drifts, and drifts over their unmarked graves. The river shrills, over the stones of the ford—a place of sunshine and deep peace.

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The singing-birds had not returned, the lizards and creatures of the sand still shunned their desecrated dwellings on the morning after the surrender. The river ran brown and slow, the air stank overpoweringly; men on duty, and a very few out of curiosity, wandered about the scene of horror. What was there to see? The holes and burrows in which men and women had been hiding from a destruction that wasted them at noonday and at night; mattresses, clothes, provisions, dead bodies, things that had been bodies once; rifles, shells, empty cartridge cases, books, letters, calcined wood and iron that had once been a waggon and had betrayed those who sheltered under it—all the hideous *débris* left by a band of men who held out against surrender as a last disgrace. There were some little children here, staring wide-eyed at a scene that had no more terrors for them; there was a little girl wounded in the arm, who still cried with the pain.

Every foot of ground that could afford shelter from above and below, from the dropping shells and the straight-flying bullets, had been scooped and hollowed and propped and banked until a little dwelling or burrow was formed in which a man could lie. Here is one such burrow, with the

sheltering bank torn and blown away, evidently by a shell; there is the man's rifle, his box of cartridges, a tin of coffee, a kettle, a strip of biltong, a psalm-book, thumbed and marked and well-worn, carried as a companion into the jaws of death. But where is the man? Behind us a droning voice rises and falls, and is lost when the wind stirs the trees; a chaplain, a group of awed, reverent soldiers, a heap of something on the ground—he is among that. Some one's brother, some one's son, turn it over with your spade and make room for more.

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No one who was at Paardeberg will ever forget it and the ghastly scenes; no one, I am sure, but is a better man for having been there. But there was another side, grand, heroic, inspiring, whether for conquerors or conquered, which I would rather leave on my readers' mind. Across the drift, out of the poisonous laager, had filed that morning a motley, ragged, uncouth, dirty crowd of men, women, and children; the men in unclean black tail-coats or tweed jackets, torn, baggy trousers, veldt-schoon and felt hats, the women in anything, the children in next to nothing. A crowd of tramps, you might have said, being marched off to the workhouse. Then you remembered where they had come from, and what they had been doing, and you imagined, only very dimly, what a complete hell that laager must have been, with

batteries pouring lyddite into it, horses being disembowelled every minute (there was no cover for the horses), waggons catching fire and burning out little children, even the wounded exposed and suffering new agonies. Then you looked at the black tail-coats and the draggled, filthy dresses. Could such dirty, untidy people be capable of so grand a heroism? Surely there was some mistake. But there they stood, and there behind them was that blood-stained shambles that they had held so dearly. Surely, then, there must be something great and noble in their leader, that he could have inspired them with such bravery? You looked at him—a small, thick-set man, shabbily dressed, dirty, with, one would have said, rather a cruel face and sulky demeanour. No, there was no personal magnetism there.

But look closer, draw nearer, join this little group, listen to what they are singing, and you have the secret of the patriotism that made that war so painful to all true patriots, whatever their country.

> 'Tis Heaven's command,
> Here should we stand,
> And aye defend the folk and land!

The broad, austere harmony lends itself to the tenor and bass voices easily singing familiar strains; it ceases, the singers take up their many-coloured bundles of blankets, and, marshalled by kindly Tommies, fall into line for the weary march into captivity. I love to think of the spirit in which

the English soldiers watched their hard-won prisoners march off on that day. Even the triumph of an avenged Majuba, so dear to Tommy's heart, was merged in a greater pride—the pride of human courage and endurance. Pro-Boer, did you say? There was not a man worth the name in all Lord Roberts's army who was not a Pro-Boer while the Paardeberg prisoners were marching away.

V

A DAY'S MARCH

Very early on a summer's morning Lord Roberts's army began its march from Poplar Grove, and many a man who grumbled at having to rise before the sun was up was dead and buried under the hill at Driefontein before the same sun had run its day's course. But that was in the evening, after weary plodding and a weary fight; such things were not thought of in the early morning. Poplar Grove! A name of blessed association for most of us, a place of rest and refreshment, an Elim on the dusty, desert march; where we washed and were clean again after days of defilement, ate and were filled after long fastings. Men went to bed with full bellies and thankful hearts on the night before Driefontein.

But it is morning now, and an inexorable servant has turned you out of the bed you stand eyeing sleepily as it is rolled up and packed on the

cart. Breakfast is a hasty affair, eaten by lamplight in the dim fragrance under the trees. Night-dews hover in the air, filling it with the perfumes of herbs and grasses that in the daylight are parched and dry. The slow commotion of the camp sends mauve clouds of dust floating, a light pall that the first coming of the sun flashes into amber. This pillar of cloud is always with the marching army, by day or night. How often has one seen it rising, grey and solemn, in the ghostly, dead light of a winter dawn; how often choked in it under the burning noon; how often watched it fade and sink, glorified by all the colours of the dying sun, until it has vanished in the orange light of a hundred twinkling camp-fires! It is Nature's one spectacle in that bare part of Africa.

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How many have tried to describe it, some with the painter's vocabulary, some with the poet's, some with both! But who has succeeded? It is unknowable, unfathomable in its glory for those who never stood on some ridge and watched the heavenly panorama unfolding itself, the dayspring in the east spouting life and colour that dyes the cloud-fleeces, bathes the earth, spreads in sheets of celestial fire, kindles at last into the awful flame of the sun. Men and beasts alike stand worshipping when day comes on those silent, empty spaces.

But the dust was amber long before the sun

was up, and on this morning the scouts and advance guards had all started before the east began to burn, or the Kaffir whips to crack, or the endless stream of ox-waggons to pour forth from the seemingly inexhaustible transport park. The Guards Brigade, ranks of men clad in soiled yellow and brushing the dewy scrub with mire-caked boots, headed the column on this march, and had formed and started before the violet and rose-pink lights began to flood the veldt.

At last the camp has emptied itself, and the Kaffir followers, huddled in their gaudy blankets, are poking about to see what has been left behind. Now for a gallop to the front of the column. You pass miles of army service corps waggons, Cape carts, Scotch carts, ox-waggons, each with its driver and *voorloeper*. Perhaps there were five miles of these marching with Lord Roberts's army; then you began to come upon regimental transport waggons, piled with greatcoats and blankets, then a mile of jingling guns—howitzers, naval guns, field guns, mountain guns—and the army itself. Only rows and rows and ranks and ranks of men, with the same torn tunics, the same worn boots, the same untidy putties, with a difference in the coloured patches of the helmets to help you to distinguish fusilier from rifleman—only that, but how much that means! The electric neighbourhood of so vast a company, all intent on one business, the rhythm of their feet treading the

grass, the vast harmony of movement and intention combined in a kind of hypnotic effect on the spectator.

For the first hour the feeling was absent, but afterwards, when the dusty and trodden region of the camp was left behind and the myriad feet brushed virgin ground, the army fell into a magic rhythm that smote the senses like a sequence of changing pictures. Now it was like an engine, swallowing up the miles before it at an even pace; now like a Juggernaut car, bruising the delicate veldt flowers, scaring the little songless birds, scattering the buck like cloud shadows before the wind; now like a great ship sailing over wide rolling seas; now like a blight, now like a benediction on the ground. But always it was like some one thing, and the rhythmic pulse beat throughout the movement of its seven-mile body. Those delicate flowers, still holding in their petals the jewel of night, that your feet crushed into the earth, they shall rise again and refresh themselves when the world has turned another cheek to the sun; that city of ants that your horse's hoof laid low will be rebuilt and extended, perhaps of his very dust; the buck that flee before your hosts, they will return when the wrathful invasion is past; all things will remain and continue, crush them or waste them as you may. Some marches were too full of suffering and dismay for this frame of mind to be possible, but to-day it was different.

The damage passed easily over the face of the veldt; it was a light affliction, it was but for a moment; and thoughts flew to revisit the stages of the march, to the silent, hot, sun-filled spaces where the creatures of the earth raised their heads again. For all the burning heat and inevitable fatigue, it was the pure joy of being alive that most men will remember as having been the essence of that march.

* * *

At midday the army halted, and bunched itself up, and got entangled round a hospitable farmhouse and a dam, and the ground was covered by the prone figures of sleeping men; but an hour later the great serpentine line had stretched itself abroad over the country again, and once more the army marched. Shoulder to shoulder the men stepped, perspiring, not talking much, but keeping up an exchange of interjections. This one will have earned a V.C. to-night, that one will have been laid in the grave, that other one will go to sleep unhurt, thinking the same thoughts and swearing the same oaths as he thought and swore last night. And to-morrow the army will march again, and to-morrow, and through all the long campaign; will it be unchanged by to-night's work? Not quite. For every gap out of which its life has leaked will let in an accession of spirit, every missing number in its ranks will mean a little spot leavened, not by

humanity, for war does not nourish that, but by human experience, and by influences that work for the growth and expansion of the mind. Men who march long miles with their eyes on the ground learn to think, although they may not have had the habit before, and a comrade lost may mean an idea born and won.

Was that thunder? Eyes strain forward, only to see the veldt stretching empty to the skyline. But those with glasses could see a line of kopjes barring the horizon. At intervals we thought we heard the sound of guns; gradually the suspicion became a certainty, and after an hour's marching we could see the clouds of smoke, like mushrooms, hanging against the hillside. French, spreading his wings while we slept, flying while we plodded, had alighted there to find a grim resistance. Men asked the name of the place: Driefontein. There was a fight going on, and we were wanted for it. The pace increased a little; men who had seemed tired showed no more signs of it, faces became serious, a kind of galvanic thrill ran through the army. Several miles yet, each step three feet nearer to the little palls of smoke and the echoing guns. Those last miles were done in a kind of dream; the long blue line of hills seemed to get no nearer; only the guns spoke louder for every step taken. Thus while the sun slanted lower, the army marched over the last few miles towards the goal that drew and drew and compelled us all, eyes

grimly fixed on the barrier chain, thoughts busy with wonder of what might be seen from it. But not to all of us was given the morning view beyond it.

VI

DUST AND FLOWERS

Bloemfontein was the first breathing-place in Lord Roberts's march. It has become a place of great importance in the history of the campaign—the base and starting-point of a hundred expeditions, but by us who took part in the famous march of which it was the object, it will always be thought of as a place of attainment, a goal, a resting-place. When the brief ceremony of occupation was over, those of us who were at liberty galloped our horses back to the region of hotels which we had passed by unwillingly on the march to the Presidency. Bedrooms first; and we fingered the white sheets and quilts like children in a fairyland. Then (for these are faithful records) downstairs to the bar; and what a scene that was! The place packed with soldiers, all clamouring and holding up their money. Remember that they had been drinking mud for weeks; that this moment had been thought of, dreamed of, longed for, discussed, with such eloquence as these simple fellows were capable of, through long dusty marches and sweltering heats; then you may understand with what

rapture they gazed upon those handles and levers by means of which the bountiful fountain of Beer was set flowing. Here was their native land, here an occasion for the use of their native tongue. 'Wot's yours, Bill? 'Ere, Miss, two pints o' bitter and a stone ginger. Good 'ealth, Bill. My word, that's a drop of all right, that is. Wot O! 'Ave another? Righto.' And so on. A public-house bar is generally a sordid enough place, but I assure you it was not so on this occasion.

Wine (and beer) made glad the heart of man and did his head no harm; the military regulations saw to that. No man drank alone; each found some one with whom to share his money and his happiness, and to join with him in tasting this wonderful, new experience at a shilling a bottle.

Across the road, at the club, you saw the same thing, translated into terms of a higher civilisation. 'That you, Kiddie? (Kiddie was an earl.) Just in time for some fizz. Come on, open another bottle.' 'Hello, Bleeder! (Bleeder was a marquis) 'there's some bottled beer here, rippin' good.' 'Sonny, (Sonny was a duke) have a drink, what?' And pop went the bottles of bad champagne (Jackson Frères, extra special cuvée) at a guinea a bottle, and merrily clinked the glasses and happily rattled the tongues.

'How dreadful,' you say, 'all these empty-headed young men carousing in the midst of all the shocking realities of war!' Ah, it was just

because we knew those realities that we enjoyed those moments of innocent relaxation. We shall never again taste such nectar as that bad Jackson Frères; that was no critical sip of an olive-cleansed palate, taste on the defensive and a scrutinising eye on the cork, but a ready, unhesitating draught, the benediction of an appetite long mortified. Into the first tingle of that gooseberry vintage was concentrated all we knew (and some of us knew a good deal) of luxury, of civilisation, of home; for in a curious way, not by vinous association, but by its quality of superlativeness, the bad champagne stood for home. For the craving of the heart and the belly thus expressed themselves, and the one first realised stood proxy for the other, so that, on this occasion at least, Jackson Frères provided an element of sacrament.

* * *

But this did not last long. The chief staff officer, with one eye on the well-being of his men and the other on the stock of liquid refreshment, shut all the bars in an hour or two; and about twenty thousand idlers were turned loose on the streets. But there were still the shops, real shops, where all sorts of nice things could be bought. When we entered Bloemfontein, we found a little town of white houses and many-coloured gardens asleep in the noonday sunshine, bees humming, fowls croaking; the pretty shops in all their

bravery displaying their wares temptingly. We had not been in Bloemfontein three hours before the whole aspect of the place was changed. The streets rang with the stamp of hoofs and the clump and shuffle of thousands of feet; dust rose in clouds wherever men walked, and spread a grey garment over the flowers in the street gardens; the shops, assaulted and outraged by the strength in which we invaded them, put up their shutters altogether, or else exhibited notices saying what they had *not* for sale, as 'no bread,' 'no oatmeal,' 'no corn until to-morrow.' Shops that sold boots, clothing or groceries were packed with a solid crowd of men; one had to wait an hour to be served. Tobacconists and barbers came next in popularity, but when one had bought to one's heart's content of the things one really needed, there still remained the greater charm of buying at the store the things one did not need.

The South African store is a compendious establishment; the aim and pride of the owner of a good store is that he should never have to say 'no' when you ask him if he keeps any conceivable article of commerce. Oh, the very smell of those stores was like magic, the characteristic odours of boots and sweets and flour and spices and tarred rope and saddlery and groceries and clothes blending into a kind of stuffy, stupefying essence that enveloped us and our commonsense, and made children of us all. Old and young men, privates and lieutenant-generals, wandered

round the ample counters of such places, pretending to be merely 'looking round,' but in reality conducting furtive negotiations for the purchase of some ridiculous and useless thing. Major-General Lord Blank, A.D.C., was to be seen trying to make up his mind between the rival charms of a pinchbeck watch and a meat-chopper. Colonel X., of the Guards' Brigade, was walking proudly out with a spade in his hand and a pillow under his arm; and I, entering with a clock ticking in one pocket and the other bulged out by a tin of golden syrup, encountered my friend the correspondent of *Blue and Green* shuffling about uneasily in a corner of the ironmongery department.

'What are you doing?' I asked, wishing that my clock did not tick so loud.

'Oh, nothing,' he replied, uneasily, 'just taking stock; you seem to have a farmyard in your pocket, and what the *devil* is that in your hand?' I had omitted to hide a bottle of Cough Balsam which I had picked up really very cheap at a neighbouring store. 'Have you got a cough?' he continued, relentlessly.

'No,' I said, 'but thought it might come in useful for cleaning harness or something. Besides, I *might* get a cough.'

'I knew you were a fool,' he said; 'but I didn't think——'

At this moment he was delivered into my hands. An assistant approached, came up to my

confused friend and said, 'The price is 3*l.*, but the boss says you can have it for 2*l.* 10*s.* Where shall we send it?'

'Oh, I didn't really want it, you know,' began my friend, now perspiring, 'I only thought——'

But at the salesman's look of blank astonishment the words died on his lips. I followed the man's glance to where it rested on a small mowing-machine, bright with green and vermilion paint, and with a particularly seductive handle of varnished pitch pine. For a moment nothing broke the silence but the loud ticking of the clock in my pocket. Then my friend said:

'I thought it would be useful, you know, in case we came to a place where was grass; we could cut it for the horses, and make it last out——' And then he blushed crimson, and simply ran out of the shop. I explained matters to the assistant and followed my friend, only pausing to buy a plush-covered workbox on the way out. But when I next saw the culprit he was walking along the street trying to pretend that he had nothing to do with a Kaffir porter who followed him, bearing a clattering array of bright, galvanised buckets and a yard brush.

* * *

That was our entertainment indoors on those first days at Bloemfontein; out-of-doors there were the flowers and gardens, and a welcome for us from

the Scotch and English residents. The place, which was later to be associated with disease and death, and all sorts of dreary squabbles, was at first simply a paradise to us who had come straight from a trying march; the whole place was in festival; sad-voiced nuns gave tea to all comers in their beautiful garden of roses and geraniums and fuchsias; and from the dust and glare of the streets there were always a dozen such beautiful sanctuaries into which we could turn for coolness and rest. Wherever one went in Bloemfontein two things were always present: the tramp, tramp, of tireless feet, with the choking atmosphere of dust they raised; and the glint of green and blaze of flowers in gardens bountiful of shade and sweetness.

VII

THE UGLIES

The bit of the Hoopstad road that I came to know so well stretched across the slightly undulating veldt north-eastward of Boshof. Boshof, indeed, was a mere incident in this lonely road between Kimberley and Hoopstad, but during the fortnight in which Lord Methuen's force was camped at Zwartzkopjesfontein Boshof was our metropolis, the object of carefully considered expeditions, the fountain-head of civilisation, the goal of our ten-mile drives to market. Boshof then was

the beginning of the road in so far as it interested us; the end of it was the camp at Zwartzkopjes, a pleasant farm on a little rocky eminence set amid a great sea of pasture that stretched almost to the northern and eastward horizons.

If you had dropped down from the clouds on one of those April days, you could not have failed to notice, within a stone's throw of the farmhouse, an exceedingly trim encampment spread on a level grass-plot that hungry sheep had converted into a lawn. The spot was cunningly chosen—close to the water and to headquarters; in fact, we were Lord Methuen's next-door neighbours, and he and his staff did more than their duty by us in the way of gossip, for they took care that we had all the latest news. On the grass were disposed a covered American spring-waggon, an ox-waggon, a spring-cart, a picket-rope for horses, and at a seemly distance, its doors opening upon a fragrant taibosch tree, the tent of your humble servant and the companion who shared his wanderings. I must hasten to add that the cunning displayed in these arrangements was not mine, but that of my stable-companion, who had acquired it in the course of more than one military campaign. It was he who ordained that the fireplace should be dug at the back of our tent, so that dinner should not grow cold on its journey from the pot to the table; he who conceived the brilliant idea of setting the two waggons side by side and stretching our awning

over them, so that the sun should not smite our servants by day, nor the rain by night; he who dug enthusiastically at drainage channels to carry off the heavy rains, and, when he was tired, made his somewhat less enthusiastic body-servant finish the job.

* * *

If you had been attracted by this snug scene, and if you had had a glimpse under the caught-up back of the waggon into the glories of our pantry, with its neat rows of tins and bottles and dishes; if you had seen our white-coated cook busy over the glowing ox-dung fire, you would probably have looked into the tent and called upon us, and, I hope, stayed to lunch. In that case I should have had to sit on a biscuit-box while you had the diminutive campstool. And after lunch you would have been taken out to see our horses when they came up from grazing—Kruger, Cronje, Jess, Bobs, 'the little mare,' and the Uglies. My most vivid memories of the Hoopstad road are centred in the Uglies—two small, lean, elderly ponies who did heroes' work in the campaign. I never saw two more ill-favoured brutes in my life; it was their duty to draw the light spring-cart that took us to our marketing in Boshof, and they were so thin that we blushed to sit behind them. When the short rations were unusually scanty, it was the Uglies who had to go without any at all, and

make their supper upon the sound of other horses munching. When a strap was wanted it was cut from the Uglies' rotten harness, and the deficiency patched up with string; anything was good enough for them. When the nights became cruelly cold, and the horses grew stiff at their picket lines, when the dew of the evening hardened to frost before morning, it was then that the thin calico coverings were taken off the backs of the Uglies and added to the thick blankets covering the sleek and clean-bred Bobs or the big-boned, well-born Jess.

* * *

Horses are thorough snobs, and the rest soon learned that they were more than a cut above the Uglies, who were not suffered even to graze beside them, but were kicked and snapped out of the way. Yet it was you, poor despised Uglies, who faithfully carried the baggage that meant health and life to your owner on the weary march to Bloemfontein; you who, when other horses sank down and died, still struggled bravely on, leaning upon each other when you could not otherwise stand upright, and taking up the burden again uncomplainingly when the morning whip cracked after a night of frosty fasting. Step by step, at the snail's pace of their eight small feet and their poor, light bodies, they dragged my effects for some three hundred and fifty miles. They were so ugly that people used to laugh at them; they had no pretty, endearing ways,

as Bobs had, who used to thrust his head under my arm and beg for biscuits as we sat at a lamp-lit supper. They were bold, not because they wanted caresses, but because they wanted food, and they would push and hustle their ugly noses round about the corn-sack, until they were shown their places by a nip from one of the aristocrats. It comforts me now to think that Tommy, the Kaffir servant who took care of me and the whole establishment, Tommy, the most expert groom in all Vryburg, and the best servant in South Africa—that he was not deceived by the low estate of these poor slaves, but saw through their apparent wretchedness to the rare virtues that shone in their hearts. It made no difference to him that they had not the wit, as the other horses had, to make up to him as the controller and issuer of forage. Tommy refused to see any difference between them and the fleet, clean-limbed Bobs. Really he loved Bobs, who had the ways of a friendly dog, but he also loved the poor, despised Uglies. For the senior and uglier of the Uglies he had, indeed, a real affection, and many a mile did he walk to get an extra wisp of hay or handful of corn for his ill-favoured friend. By him the dusty coats of the Uglies were groomed as though they were the coats of park hacks; by him their rotten harness was washed and polished; from his bed a blanket was taken to cover one of them; he shamed me into contributing a covering for the other, and he sat up late many a night

mending the straps of their harness or nosebags. And when at length their strength was quite spent, and I sold the pair of them for ten pounds, and their purchaser, repenting of his bargain the moment the cheque was signed, was leading them away, eyeing them resentfully, it was Tommy who said, regarding the senior Ugly with grave concern, 'He's been a good horse to me, sir.'

* * *

One memorable fact in connection with the Hoopstad road was that it did not lead to Hoopstad, at least in so far as we had to do with it. We started bravely enough one morning out of Boshof, with a great open fan of scouts spread out over the bare country to our front; made Zwartzkopjes that afternoon, and marched next morning to Mahemsfontein. Orders from Lord Roberts bade us halt there, but as the pasture was poor we withdrew to Zwartzkopjes, from whence, after waiting for a fortnight, we were ignominiously ordered to retire again on Boshof. The fortnight was occupied by merry scampers with light columns after the Boers, whom we never caught, although we had many skirmishes with them, and by a few expeditions to Boshof to replenish our larder.

There was a store at Boshof. Need I say more? Ah, Mr. Beck, with what patience you waited while we strayed round your counters, fingering this and tasting that! Well you knew

that your patience would be rewarded, and that we should not leave you until our pockets bulged and our cart-springs creaked again.

But these expeditions were comparatively rare, and were never undertaken without anxious forethought as to the state of the roads and the whereabouts of the Boers. If the roads were heavy the Uglies could not pull the cart; and as we had no pickets between Boshof and Zwartzkopjes it behoved us to find out what the Intelligence Department knew of the whereabouts of the enemy. If they told us the road was not safe we went with light hearts, but if they reported all clear we preferred to stay at home. As such times as these, and when the mists and rain came drifting across the plain and hung about the camp, we retired within our tent and wrote letters, cast up our accounts, worried the servants, gossiped about the probable developments of the campaign (it was then at a dead halt), paid visits of ceremony at headquarters, read last month's newspapers, and thought about what we should have for dinner. Perhaps there would be an alarm that Boers had been seen on a kopje three miles away, and then ensued a frantic chase after horses, a rapid saddling up, and a wild cross-country canter with Lord Chesham; and, perhaps, the sight through powerful glasses of three Boers galloping away in front of us.

But when the corn was running low and the

store of soap dwindling, the Uglies would be called in from their pretence at grazing on the bare scrub, given an almost generous feed, and harnessed to the cart. Two servants would invariably stand at their heads while my partner in these possessions and I climbed to our seats; but when the horses' heads were 'let go' and the reins tightened, there was generally a flatness of effect akin to that experience of opening a bottle of dead champagne. But by plying the whip a start was made, and we rumbled over the short grass, past the sentries and the examining post, out on to the lonely road. There was always enough risk to add a considerable spice of adventure to these journeys, and it was strange to drive along the bare, empty plain, and wonder how many eyes saw us, and how many watchers on the flanking hills took note of our movements. For watch us they did, and although they were never seen by us, every movement along that road was known to the enemy. Fortunately for us it did not suit their purpose to molest us, and we made our way unharmed along the undulating track, feeling very much like men sitting in a lighted signal-box at night. We could see nothing, but we ourselves were seen.

Having triumphantly passed the Boshof sentry, the Uglies would be once more whipped up to their poor best for a dignified entry down the main street, fringed with willows and poplars and

bordered with clear running streams. Round the stoep of the inn a number of the citizens of Boshof were unwillingly loafing, for there was no commerce going on in the village, and no one was allowed to go out beyond the lines to the farms. We would be hailed for news of the world, and, while the Uglies were being put up like real horses in the inn stables (only there was nothing for them to eat except the humble fare they had brought with them), we would pretend we knew, and discuss glibly the latest doings of Bloemfontein and London.

But more serious occupations were on hand. We might presently have been seen departing on our domestic errands, my companion to the store, with a long list in his hand, I to the Army Service Corps, where I had a friend. Truly, friendship oils the wheels of business. I present a 'chit,' on which it is definitely stated that I am entitled to draw, on payment, ten pounds of oats a day, no more; but my friend, smiling, points to goodly sacks of oats and bales of forage, and instructs his orderly to 'load up Mr. Young's cart with those.' Then in haste to the store (just in time to prevent my partner from buying a sewing machine), and thereafter to a merry lunch with Colonel Winter, who was the life and soul of Boshof in those uneventful days. The early part of the afternoon passed quickly; soon, too soon for them, the Uglies were harnessed and brought round to the inn, and

then, with a pause at the baker's to fill up our spare space with bread, we drove down the straight, fragrant streets followed by the envious eyes of the idlers, passed the jealous sentry, and were out again on the white road.

* * *

There was a joy in those journeys that cannot be known to people who regard a railway or a motor-car as the only possible means of land travel. Every rise in the road, every stony place, the point where lay a dead ox, who was a little more dead every time we passed, the prospect of getting home before dark, the arguments as to whether the Uglies were or were not getting a little fatter—things like these belonged to the interest and fascination of our expeditions. Generally we had stayed over-long gossiping at Boshof, and it was dark before we reached our journey's end. When we had still perhaps half of our way to go, the sun sank; before the blaze had faded behind the western hills we were drawing a rug round us; five minutes later the veldt on each side of the road was growing dusk, and the horizon narrowing on each side of us into hedges of misty purple; another five minutes, and we drove through a dimness that was only broken by the white road visible for fifty yards in front of us; five minutes more and it was night, black and chill as winter; not a sight of anything but a

glint of white road, not a sound to be heard but the beat of hoofs and the grating and chirping of wheels over the stones. Then came a time of careful driving over treacherous bits of ground, anxious watching for the first sight of the camp lights, and, finally, round a sudden bend, the snug glow of our own camp-fire and lamp.

Kind hands were waiting to unharness the Uglies, expectant hands bore off our boxes and bales and packages, willing hands laid our table and spread our meal. From along the picket-lines odd snortings and whinnyings were heard, and absurd pawings and stampings of some who knew well what the Uglies had brought; but these sounds soon gave place to a solid, regular noise of munching, and, a little while after, to steady breathing and snoring, for on such nights even the loose skins of the Uglies grew tight before they lay down to sleep. . . . Farewell, Uglies, a long farewell; it is in the caprice of destiny that your lives are remembered for a little while longer than others of far greater worth; but it is only for a moment. There are two things of which we can none of us be cheated, of which we shall all unfailingly get our due portion — silence and oblivion. We shall all be together and equal in that.

IV

HOUSES OF BONDAGE

HOUSES OF BONDAGE

I

PORTLAND PRISON is a monastery without the prayers. No foot of woman ever passes within its gates, and the community is devoted to labour and silence.

The hours are divided as are the hours in a monastery; from matins and lauds, said on the knees with scrubbing-brush and pail, to solitary compline in the gathering dusk, the clanging of the prison bell punctuates the day; and this minute division of time, which is the secret of so many things, is the secret of making a hard lot endurable and dull hours and rough weather pass quickly. For on that brave promontory of Southern England where the land juts out in the form of a bird's head the winds are eager and the labour is hard. To chip away at the inexhaustible stone is the lot of a Portland convict. Day by day, week by week, year by year, the stone is quarried in this strange workyard hung between the sky and the bright floor of the sea. Tombstones and cathedrals, breakwaters and whole cities are dug out of the island and sent floating all over the world by the agency of this penitential labour; and it is a strange thing to see some ancient blackguard

toiling with his chisel and hammer upon an article of stone that shall presently go forth to be blessed by priests, fixed in some holy place, and consecrated by the prayers and psalms of piety.

I spent a long day of wind and sun walking and clambering about the works with the governor of Portland. The children of iniquity had been set to build a new prison for themselves; and we climbed up the great scaffoldings until we stood on the roof of the new building, where a batch of convicts were plying their newly-acquired craft of the stone-mason. Beneath us the world lay like a map, with the great sweep of the Chesil beach disappearing in the westward haze, and the sea outspread in deep sapphire tipped here and there with flecks of foam.

All about us sounded the clink of tools, the ringing of the trowel and the blow of the hammer striking steel against stone, while farther away drab squads of men were delving in the quarries, the yellow and grey of the inland view only relieved by the blue of the warders' uniforms and the glint of the sunshine on their bayonets. It was a busy, productive scene of the elementary hand labour of man on this earth; but who were the men, and what were they building?

* * *

Do not suppose them to be a race or class apart, physically isolated though they are. The majority of them are merely the people who have been found

out. They were but yesterday, perhaps, our neighbours on the thronging stage of life, unmarked, undistinguished from the virtuous, of the same colour as the crowd. Presently they will emerge again upon the world; but in the meantime they are travelling in a strange land, their will, that wandered just over the margin of freedom, taken from them like a child's misused toy, and themselves sent to school in that mysterious realm of punishment and discipline that lies behind the prison walls.

There is no great mystery about social crime. The local prisons are almost entirely filled by the victims of drink, or rather the people who get sent to prison through drink. The real victims remain outside. And nearly the whole of the prisons in England are filled by the denizens of miserable and insanitary and crowded houses. If you could eliminate the products of those two great breeding grounds of social disease, the public-house and the slum, I venture to say that one convict and one local prison would hold all the remaining criminals.

The majority are creatures of circumstance; indeed, to visit a convict prison is to realise that they are everybody and anybody. They are Mr. Smith, your next-door neighbour, who had an accident with a pen; the parson, who lived forty years of kindly and useful life and then, by the lesion of some obscure tissue of his brain, found himself under the social wheel; the doctor who carried his skill in surgery a shade too far; the solicitor who

forgot, the financier who failed, the clerk who had a sick wife, the labourer who was hungry: in a word, but for some trifling derangement of circumstance, you and me.

* * *

Outwardly models of discipline and sound government, prisons seemed to me intrinsically shameful places—terrible even in their cleanliness, in their frigid and precise external propriety. For a long time I wondered why, until I saw that cleanliness was there divorced from its true mates, adornment, sanity, and self-respect. In the outside world cleanliness is a signal and result of certain wholesome qualities; but it is not so in prisons. All the prisoners are not naturally clean; they are forced into cleanliness; it is (to many of them) a mark of humiliation. And that is why I call terrible the spotless asphalt, the brilliant tin-ware, the scrubbed planks, and the shining intolerance of a speck of dirt; they are those most decadent of all things, unnatural virtues.

Terrible also is the sterility of prisons. There are but the husks of men there. All will, all initiative, all individuality, all the things that make human beings attractive to one another, are absent. There are exceptions, but I speak now of prisons as a whole. The voices of these human husks are silent; they are like so many bells from which the clappers have been taken away. In and out, up

and down, they walk at a sign of command; grotesquely clothed, they bend to their tasks, eat, lie down, and rise at a common signal, like so many mechanical contrivances. If you should be awake to-morrow morning at ten minutes past five, reflect that upon the stroke of that hour thousands and thousands of these silent dummy figures are starting up from their uniform bed to don uniform clothes in rows and rows of uniform cells in uniform prisons all over England; and consider whether it be not rather a daunting circumstance. Not Blake himself, picturing myriad graves gaping simultaneously at the Archangel's trump, could have much exceeded the horror of this yellow resurrection.

There is an ugly prison axiom, which I learned first at Portland: *The worse the blackguard the better the prisoner.* As you go about the prison, and observe those convicts who are permitted the little tasks of privilege—such as decorating the altar in the chapel or tidying the garden, or any of those light and semi-responsible jobs which convicts love—you will see that the privileged are not, as a rule, the young and respectable, but the old, professional criminals. They know the rules of the prison; they spend the greater part of their lives there; they know exactly how to behave, so as to earn the maximum of marks; their object is to get out in the shortest possible time, and to have as light as possible work while they are in. The warders like them, because they know their

work without having to be taught it. '*There's no servant like an old thief*,' an aged warder said to me; 'ah! good work they do.' Which brings me to the second great prison axiom: that a man's conduct in prison is no criterion of his conduct outside. A warder who was showing me over the chapel pointed with some pride to the many gorgeous texts which were emblazoned on the wall. 'All done by one man,' he said; 'a very good prisoner he was, and he was here off and on for thirty years.' I looked at the texts, and thought of the unhappy product of thirty years' prison-life, who, after intervals of evil-doing in the world, was wont to come back here and resume his monastic labour on the walls, and lovingly spread the paint as he traced out *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.* Such men are the mainstay of the prison system.

And as you go about the world of Portland, ringing with the sounds of labour, but as voiceless as a graveyard, you cannot but note the strange destinies which have overtaken some of its inhabitants, and the strange changes in their occupation which time and circumstance have brought about. Here is a solicitor, whom once an atmosphere of quills, parchment, and red-tape pervaded, now delving in a smoking manure-heap. There is a clergyman, once the nice adjuster of theologies, now reduced to the stark realities of stone and chisel. After his abstractions, what an overwhelm-

ing simplicity! There is the stone, there is the chisel; the stone must be smaller by evening, or there will be trouble. And there, again, is the unsavoury hero of a ten-days' scandal, now reduced to being one of a band of industrial workers. No longer the unpleasant notoriety; just the man who has to haul up the bucket when the other man fills it with mortar. It is a striking change.

Portland, it will be seen, is hardly a place of conscious shame, nor should I think it is very much a place of reform. Lonely, clean, and wind-swept, with the changing field of the sea as background to the bleak outlines of its stone buildings, it is a landmark in time as well as in space—an industrial community, well governed, whose members make roads and churches for the island-neighbourhood, and send lighthouses, cathedrals, and cities abroad over the globe; but for themselves build only a new prison.

II

There are problems in all the prisons, but at Parkhurst I found that each prisoner was a problem by himself. For all its beauty of situation, the brightness of its gardens and the greenness of the surrounding fields, Parkhurst is one of the saddest places and most difficult prisons in England. It is the last resource of our convict system. Those who are unmanageable elsewhere are somehow managed here; those who cannot work else-

where find occupation here. It is peopled by the weak of heart, the strong of temper, the delicate, the maimed, the diseased, the halt, the aged, and the blind of the convict world. Any one who for any reason requires special attention, any one too delicate to endure the rougher life of the other prisons, is sent to Parkhurst. Also all Jewish convicts go there; and there is in the grounds a synagogue, which on holy days sets up its rival psalmody within earshot of the Anglican and Roman establishments hard by. And there are Armenians, Germans, gipsies, and negroes; so no wonder Parkhurst is a unique and a difficult place.

There are those who, visiting Parkhurst and seeing its gardens and fair prospect, its light labour and generous food, have deemed it a happy place for criminals, and an abode of contentment and well-being. Such a view is surely but superficial. For my part, I found it a heart-breaking place enough, with its various and afflicted population. There are so many ghosts there, so many monuments of ruin; for the disaster of the refined and educated man is infinitely greater than that of the man who has never had a chance; and his punishment is incalculably greater.

The spectres of happiness that walk in the yards at Parkhurst, labour in its workshops, or twiddle their thumbs at some apology for occupation, are but the prison counterparts of all that is great and distinguished in the busy world. All that is of

mark there—pride of station and of race, intellectual attainment, financial mastery, professional distinction—each of these, with a hundred others, has its ghost in these aisles of torment. Under the indignity of the hideous clothes and the clipped heads and faces, beneath the convict slouch and shuffle, you see here and there piteous survivals of some lost grace, some rusted dignity, some indescribable signal of the gentleman that once was and can never be again.

Those who are able for it labour in the fields or workshops, and the pick of the able-bodied work in the splendid printing shop, where all the books and stationery of the Prisons Department are printed and bound. But the variety of ailments among the convicts makes the allotment of work extremely difficult. This man has a rupture, and must not lift weights; that one has a weak heart, and must not be fatigued or excited. This man has varicose veins, that man has acute rheumatism; upon all hands some physical disability—often slight enough, and that a freeman who had to earn his living would disregard—has very properly to be regarded here and taken into account in the distribution of labour.

* * *

But these are only the externals, and important as such externals as food and labour are to the convict, they are not the most important things to an onlooker. The faces of the prisoners—they are

what speak to and fascinate the man who has any understanding or imagination. They are the strange books that one longs and tries to read, sealed though they be by silence, separated though they be from the reader by the great sea of freedom. Once so differing, now all seared and ugly—all stamped with the same cruel image of bondage—along how many strange, converging roads have they not fared to keep this tryst with destiny and each other!

To see them at exercise is to be hypnotised by ugliness. In three concentric circles — the old and infirm and small within, the hale and long-limbed without—these tragic units revolve, until their movement past your eyes resolves itself into a vision of wheels within wheels. Slouching, swaggering, creeping, striding, shuffling, sliding, stumbling, nearly dehumanised, all with the ugly look of coercion on their faces, herded and driven by their keepers, with never a sound but the scrape and shuffle of their feet, they are an unsightly reminder of what man may be when his little graces are stripped from him, his little plausibilities silenced:

> Like ape or clown in monstrous garb,
> With crooked arrows starred,
> Silently we went round and round
> The slippery asphalt yard;
> Silently we went round and round.
> And no man spoke a word.

But the picture of Parkhurst that is unforgetable is that seen when the convicts march in from labour at the end of the day. At other convict prisons, order, discipline, and uniformity have welded the men into a kind of army; and they have the mass and cohesion of an army. But at Parkhurst it seemed different. Every man is an individual there, and seems to carry out and in with him at morning, noon, and evening his own private burden of shame on his own shoulders. Into his cell, that voiceless solitude, we may not follow him, nor know the phantasms that inhabit there with him; but we can see him as he passes on his way there, when the revolving wheels of routine bring him out of the sunlight and restore him to the dark company of his thoughts.

Stand, then, with the governor on the little railed-off platform in the yard from which he inspects the evening shepherding of his black sheep. As the hour of five strikes, a distant tramp of feet is heard, and the first party of convicts, ranked two and two, and formed so closely that the chin of each man seems to rest on the shoulders of the man in front of him, enters the yard. As they pass the governor the chief warder, who stands beneath him, enters their numbers in his book, after which they are formed up in open order in the yard, with their arms and their coats unbuttoned, while the warders rapidly pass their hands over them lest haply any contraband articles should have been

concealed. This process is gone through four times a day, on the departure to and return from labour in the morning and afternoon.

But now the tramp of feet sounds louder, as from every entrance to the yard more parties converge upon the centre. As they are being numbered they mark time for a moment, and one has a chance to study their faces and bearing. You can easily pick out the habituals, the incorrigibles. Anatomists say they recognise them by their cranial asymmetry, by the unusual depth of the median occipital fossa, and the exaggeration of the orbital arches and frontal sinuses. Just so; but it needs no scientific knowledge to recognise an ugly, cruel, dehumanised brute when you see him. Some of these men are of a large physique, and some, the incorrigibly murderous, wearing the terrible black and drab suit of assault, and with chains jangling on their limbs, are like the apparitions of a nightmare. But there are others who are not brutes, although while they are in gaol they are only half human. As they march past, some swaggering, some weary, some defiant, some sullen, some resigned, you may read all human nature in the scroll they present. The tallest march in front, and the physique dwindles until, hobbling along in the rear, you see some old man with a kind face framed in white hair. Whatever his crime—murder, probably—the fires that prompted it have long died out: he lives on like a dream.

And last of all, and ugliest of all, come the 'W.M.'s,' the weak-minded — not sane, but not certified as lunatic. Sly, furtive, silly, lewd, cruel countenances, with here and there a mask of dreadful giggling inanity—they are the worst of all, as vicious and mischievous as apes, yet not, in the esteem of doctors, wholly mad—not quite mad enough to have earned the comforts of Broadmoor! . . . . As the little columns march away into the gathering gloom, each looking like some enormous drab centipede, you are reminded that each of the drab centipedes is articulate of human beings, the burden and problem of those who govern them, and that they are your burden and problem too.

III

The circumstances in which men and women are hanged in English prisons are perhaps not perfectly realised, or we should surely find some substitute for the sordid, Hogarthian barbarities of the existing regulations. They are based on pompous survivals which impart to an execution a grim and ghastly morbidity, but do not affect its value to society. The prison officials—the people who know more about executions than any one else, who are watching the condemned man for weeks before his death and noting the effects of his punishment—are almost unanimous in their disapproval of the whole barbarous business. And

by barbarous I do not mean that it is unscientific; the mechanical part of an execution is carried out as mercifully as it well could be. It is the circumstances surrounding this doubtful act which seem to me to be barbarous, because they inflict moral torture as well as physical death. Where society demands the death of an offender, it tacitly accepts that death as an expiation of the offence, a settling of all accounts; but to punish as well—!

***

In a large local prison I was being shown that part devoted to prisoners awaiting their trial. Through the panel of one door, wide open for the purpose of observation, I caught a silhouette of a tall man sitting at a table writing furiously. 'He is waiting his trial for murder,' said the warder; 'he is sure to get the rope.' That was all; but the silhouette seen through the open panel of that door haunted me through my subsequent investigations, and furnished in imagination the inhabitant of that place which I was afterwards shown. Even when I looked upon the gallows I saw not the beams and hinges and levers, but the figure of the tall man, framed in the open panel of his cell door, furiously writing.

For the large, pleasant room in the central hall and the little brick building in the prison yard have apparently nothing to connect them with each other; yet they are joined by a thread of

sinister thought and tragic custom. The one is the world's last shelter to those whom our laws declare to have forfeited the privilege of life; the other contains the simple but dread machinery whereby the debt is paid. It is like a large market booth or stall that should remain closed for months at a time, and only take down its shutters to do business with a notable customer. And it is only when Death comes to make a purchase that the little house in the yard opens its door and hangs out its sign.

The man who lives in the pleasant room never sees the little house in the yard until he sets forth upon his last short journey. But first he must pass three weary weeks in that condemned room, there, if he tastes it at all, to taste the bitterness of death. To his end he is carefully watched and guarded, fed liberally, and his health (that once was nursed for so different a purpose) diligently encouraged by extra nourishment and exercise. There, by the same machinery that ordains his death, are crowded upon him the consolations of religion. There he eats and sleeps, guarded night and day by two fellow-men who would gladly be spared the task. These may not read or sleep, but must incessantly watch him, whether he reads or sleeps. At his meals, in his dreams, in his prayers, in his last farewells, in his agony or stoicism, they must watch him; and through that last dreamless sleep, which nature kindly grants to nearly all who are to die

this death on the morrow, they must still watch him. Sometimes he talks with them to relieve the burden of this grim and steadfast communion; but there are two subjects on which a condemned man hardly ever speaks: and they are his crime and his end. No curiosity concerning those who have passed through that chamber before him seems to trouble him; no pride or shame in his crime moves him to utterance. The truth is that if he be sensitively alive at all he is beyond curiosity or hope or remorse; he is caught in the wheels of a slow machinery, hypnotised by the striking hours and the passage of his numbered minutes.

So it is that when he awakes to discard once and for ever the prison uniform of disgrace and to dress himself in the clothes of his freedom, to listen for the shuffle of feet outside his door and to brace himself for the last effort, the click of the key in the lock—that warning catch in the slow machinery of his doom—comes with healing and relief.

* * *

In some prisons the gallows are so close to the condemned cell that the whole business, from the moment the executioner enters the cell until the prisoner is dead, occupies less than a minute. But in the prison of which I am writing it was a good hundred yards from the cell to the execution-shed—too far for faltering feet, but all too short for those who are still alive enough to know that

the morning air is sweet and that the sun is still shining. . . . And now along the echoing corridor, down the iron steps, out upon the winding path where the sparrows chorus and the hum of the world rolls in on the morning quiet, our tragic voyager passes presently by a strip of green turf, where, each denoted by a small stone let into the wall, initialled and dated, his predecessors lie. Here his own grave gapes for him, and here, while his ears are still open, he must listen to words taken from the burial service—two gross and needless barbarities. To recite to a doomed man what is designed as a comfort to the living is a prostitution of prayer and an ugly piece of cruelty; by far the most sordid among the sordid survivals of a country whose professed religion explicitly forbids cruelty.

Fortunately we know that in tragic moments of this kind the sensations of the chief actor are generally far outside himself, absorbed in trivial and irrelevant things. Therefore it may be that often from that treacherous platform the last thing heard is not the priest's voice, but the roar and whistle of a train carrying its unconcerned hundreds up to the world of London or down to the open sea; and the last thing seen is not the gloomy little group of embarrassed faces, but the sky, free and blue and cloud-flecked, where the birds are.

V

A MORNING DREAM IN IRELAND

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FOR three weeks in the north-west of Ireland, for a week in the east, and now for a week in the south-west, the rain had daily fallen upon me, and I had grown accustomed to the morning thought that whatever else the day might hold for me, fine weather would not be among its benefits. But when my shutters were opened on the first morning of October an unusual brightness filled the room: and when I turned to the window I saw that the sun was really shining and that the sky was blue. It was too rare and good to be missed, and as quickly as possible I was on my way down the terraces to where the river Maigue was rippling in brown and silver and making its many-toned talk about the foundations of the manor house.

The air had that soft rare sweetness that belongs peculiarly to sunlit mornings and evenings after rain in Ireland, where, breathed by the heart as well as by the lungs, it awakens hope and regret, and stirs the dead leaves of joy and grief. The whole world about me lay incredibly still and bright; the sun, early as it was, struck warm between the shoulder-blades; and as I crossed the sloping lawn and leaned upon a bridge where the water lay deep and golden and brown after its

silver hurry over the shallows, I could do nothing for a time but breathe and dream, and listen to the morning music of the river. For the Maigue is the spirit and genius of Adare demesne; you are never far away from it, nor long out of ear-shot of its many voices which on a still morning like this come crowding on you from every side. You have left it running placidly north through the green water meadows, and suddenly in the midst of a shrubbery a bridge carries you across it, running helter-skelter due south; it glides sleekly along the wall of a ruined monastery, and foams and swirls outside the ramparts of Desmond Castle. It visits everything, from the manor house to the mill, until after a journey through less distinguished acres than these its rippling soprano becomes merged in the deep voice of the Shannon, and so joins the great chorus of the sea.

Where should one go on such a morning? The whole demesne lay invitingly before me in its incomparable variety of loveliness. One might walk under trees or keep in the sunny meadows, or wander over close-cut turf; one might follow the river or lose oneself in the walled solitude of the deer park, or sit and meditate under the grey towers of ruined churches. On one side the clustering buildings of an Augustinian abbey tempted me; on another the square towers and ivied gables of a Trinitarian priory; on another the hoary walls and battlements of Desmond Castle.

where the peace seemed all the deeper because of the memories of blood and battle that hung about its empty chambers. But nearer me than these, and on a sunny slope of the meadows stood a cluster of ruins that attracted me most of all—the ruins of the Franciscan priory. It stood there all alone in the stillness like a grey rock showing above a sea of green grass, and as soon as I could tear myself away from the running talk of the river I crossed the sea of living green and entered its precincts—partly because I like the Franciscans, and the birds were singing an October after-song, and partly because I could walk to it across a green stretch of mown lawn, and it is a good thing to walk on mown grass in the early morning when your shadow lies long upon it and your foot-prints leave a track in the bloom of the dew.

I went under the archway and became enveloped in an even greater stillness than that of the sunny world outside. The walls and window spaces are wonderfully preserved; only the roof is gone, as though all the prayers that had been said and psalms chanted there had at last worked their spell and let Heaven into the old, grey-walled space where the monks and priors are sleeping so peacefully. What dignity there may be in destruction! Once, perhaps, when this building was roofed and plastered, there were things here that might have offended a consciously trained sense of the fit and artistic; not so now when all that was accidental

and temporary has gone and left nothing but the perfect proportions and crumbling substance of the shell. For rooms dark and narrow, bare and sunless between high stone walls, become light and spacious when opened to the sky—and how suddenly beautiful! Wild flowers growing in the fire-places, turf covering the pavement of the sanctuary, and nothing but a gentle swelling of the green carpet to remind one of the silent, forgotten company beneath; clouds and sky instead of the cobwebby rafters of a roof, and the cool sweet morning air instead of the hanging odour of incense—changes like these seem to bring back the building into touch with things not of one century or one place or one religion, but with the universal and eternal inheritance of life.

* * *

Every place that has been inhabited and deserted by man has its ghosts, who will come and hold an easy communion with you if you will only be quiet, and wait and listen in the early unsoiled hours. So I sat on the grassy altar steps and let the spirit of the place speak to me as it would. I was in an agreeably receptive mood, still half mused by the sight and sound of the river, and pleasantly drugged by the unwonted sweetness of the morning air. Perhaps I should see the brothers coming in to say Mass or to sing the office of Prime; perhaps I should see Thomas, Earl of Kildare, and Joanna,

his wife, emerging from the mists of the fifteenth century, and burning a candle in honour of Saint Michael the Archangel; or Cornelius O'Sullivan listening to the voice of the 'bell of great value' chiming from the belfry which he erected; or some of the many Fitzgibbons, Fitzmorrises, O'Briens, and Fitzgeralds who furnished the Convent and made it beautiful with sumptuous vestments, crosses, patens, and 'silver chalices washed with gold'; who lived and prayed here, who died and sleep here. Perhaps I should see the harsh, alien face of an English soldier, and hear the clash of arms and the sound of prayers stifled in groans that belonged to a later and darker day in the story of this house. Most of all I should like to have seen the prior and his convent come shuffling in to sing the morning office, or watch the brown-habited figures trooping across the fields to the labours of the day.

But the person who did appear was, after all, quite another, and had no particular concern with the monastery except the concern of pious respect. Looking through the empty space of a window towards the river, I suddenly saw walking beside it a figure which, by some mysterious intuition, I knew to be that of no less a person than Thady Quin, Esquire, a former lord of this manor, and restorer of fortune to the ancient family to which it belongs. I believe no portrait of him is in existence, and little is definitely known of him by

me or any person now living, but I saw him—or rather, being wide awake, believed that I saw him —on the first morning of October in the year 1908; saw him as a small, spare, but rather brisk little figure of a man, dressed in a long, squarish, grey home-spun coat and breeches, grey stockings and buckled shoes, with an odd three-cornered hat on his head, and a deerhound walking at his heels. He appeared to be walking across the water meadows, and passed quite close by the abbey walls, where I could see him clearly through the windows; but he did not see me, although his pale grey eyes looked straight at the spot where I was sitting. It was a quick, intelligent face, and would have been rather foxy-looking but for the wide eyes and strong chin.

Thady Quin had been much in my mind for the last few days, and this vision of him was, of course, merely one of those mysterious answers which our senses sometimes make to the questions and speculations of the brain. I had read such facts as were recorded of this Thady, but until that moment they had belonged to no living human figure: now I saw, as one sees sometimes even in the dim mirror of the past, that Thady Quin was not a name only but a real man, thinking and seeing, whose feet had once pressed this ground, and who on just such a morning as this a century and a half ago had listened to the voice of the Maigue. And on the instant such facts as I knew

about him grouped themselves into a living order and made Thady Quin for ever real to me.

* * *

Families are like trees, for ever encrusting themselves with a tough and thickening substance of what was once young and tender, while the living sap mounts ever thinner and higher, until in its appointed hour this ancient structure of the family dies out and is continued only in the growth of far-blown seedlings. Thady Quin, as I read the history of his family, was like a cutting from the ancient stock of the O'Quins in Clare, who had exhausted all the nourishment of the soil in that country—a cutting now transplanted to flourish and grow strong for a while in this goodly land of Adare.

Even from the few facts that are available with regard to the life and times of Mr. Thady Quin, it is obvious that there were many difficulties in the path of the re-founder of a family towards the end of the seventeenth century in Ireland. Out of the clamour and quarrelling of that time, and dust of battle between Catholic and Protestant, Celt and Saxon, this small, square figure of Thady stands conspicuous as one endowed with a sense of the dignity and permanence of things; one who wished to live at peace rather than at war with his neighbours, to get on with the great business of making his family rich and important in Limerick as it

had once been rich and important in Clare. But what difficulties they put in his way! When he wished to marry his son to an heiress, they put it about that his father was a piper and that he himself had been a solicitor in Limerick. Evidently these rumours had been troubling Thady for a long time, and he determined to put an end to them by writing in his own crabbed hand a long letter to the young lady's grandfather in which he went into the whole question of his own position and that of his family; and in days like that, when documents were few and inaccessible, it says much for Thady's determination to pull things together that he had made himself master of the main facts connected with every branch of the O'Quin family in Ireland. All these facts he set down in his letter, and then dealt with the accusation that he had been a solicitor. It was quite true, he said, that his father had designed to make him a lawyer—or, as I understand his letter, to equip him with some knowledge of law; and for that purpose sent him to a solicitor in Limerick where he might learn something of the 'practicle part of the law.' He did so, and 'studied hard Coke upon Littleton' and other books. But obviously Thady had no intention of devoting himself to the law. The family properties were very small at that time, and no doubt while his father lived there was a difficulty in persuading him to allow Thady to relinquish his legal studies; but, at his

death, a convenient rumour having arisen that Roman Catholic lawyers would be suspended, Thady abandoned the Limerick office and betook himself to 'country affairs and to my industry, and a hundred a year, and the stock I had by my father's death, and to my portions God gave that blessing that I am now like others envyed.' *

* * *

But such rumours as these were not Mr. Thady's only difficulty in life. By sheer persistence and prosperity he silenced them; but he lived in a very difficult time—a time which became more and more difficult for a Roman Catholic landowner and founder of a family. And when we come to Thady's religion we are on difficult ground indeed, and the mists of time grow thicker than ever. For Thady was a Catholic, and yet he received grants from the Crown in 1684. Thady was a Catholic, and was enrolled in one of King James's regiments; and possibly served in the battle of the Boyne, and was back in his own house in Limerick during the siege; and when it was a benefit to be adjudged within the Articles of Limerick in 1698, Thady appeared in them; when that was not a benefit, Thady was adjudged not to be within the Articles. Thady

* Memorials of Adare Manor. By Caroline, Countess of Dunraven. With Historical Notices of Adare by her son, the Earl of Dunraven. P. 179. Privately printed, 1865.

was a Catholic, and yet could produce long lists of Protestant gentry and clergy to give evidence that he had always been friendly to the Protestants, and had helped to defend them from injuries, and so got himself distinguished from his fellow Catholics who were enemies to the English interest; Thady was a Catholic and was indicted for high treason, but upon exhibition these bills of indictment were returned *ignoramus* by the Grand Juries of each county concerned. And finally, Thady was a Catholic and held on to his possessions when his fellow-Catholics were losing theirs; remained free while they were being cast in prison, grew rich while they were becoming poor, and lived and flourished while they were suffering in body and estate.

No doubt there is not any subtle explanation necessary for all this; in so far as I can read the features of Thady, although he was a solid and prudent man, with just a touch of lawyer's guile about him, he was not a subtle man. His heart was anchored deep in the land; he had, above all things, as I have said, the instinct of family; he must raise up children; he must acquire land, he must prosper, he must leave his name and estate more considerable than he found them. Through all the tortuous ways of that time I see him marching straight on to this end, as I saw him in my vision walking across the meadows at Adare. It is surely not very hard from even such slight facts as we know to recon-

struct by the sympathetic process some semblance of the man he must have been. It is probable that he was of a type far less common in his own day than in ours; perhaps he took religion and politics in their essence rather less seriously than his neighbours, and alternately fretted and smiled at the way in which the great march of life was stultified and arrested by these quarrels and differences of a day; because he befriended the Protestants and kept on good terms with the Powers that were, it is not necessary to assume that he was either a hypocrite or a traitor to his own cause. It is even conceivable that he deemed it neither beneath the dignity of a gentleman nor disgraceful to the profession of a Christian to behave in a neighbourly manner to those who, like him, stood for settlement, peace, and domesticity, even though their religion took a different form from his. It is highly probable, moreover, that he realised the concrete benefits likely to arise from his enlightened point of view, and felt that he was entitled to the profit of it. He was no inhuman person we may be sure—no one could be who did the things that Thady did; and he had his way with women, too, for he was married three times, and made good matches.

His sentiment remains hidden in his dead life, and is nowhere shown in his visible or recorded acts; no more in the buying and selling and letter writing and conveyancing and petitioning that

he did than in the house that he built—square, practical, and solid like himself; and designed, like him, to be but a station in the advancing march of his family, and to make way, as he himself would have chosen, for a grander and more imposing structure.

He died when he was eighty, and two bequests of his are still in use—one a chalice presented to the Catholic Church of Adare, the other a monstrance in the Church of St. John in Limerick, given in honour of the blessed sacrament. And the one request he made individually for himself and not for his family speaks pathetically from the surface of the old silver—*Orate pro eo.*

* * *

So much I had known and gathered concerning this Thady Quin, when I saw him walking from the river in the soft morning sunshine. I sat surrounded by dead and crumbling things, within the shadow of the great yew-tree in the cloister, that drew its sombre nourishment from things long dead and changed. I was steeped not in the present, but in the past. The only living things about me were things like trees and grasses, which, compared with the transitory life of man, change so slowly and imperceptibly, that they seem to be stationary in time, and to hold many generations and centuries within the span of their existence. So that when the short, brown figure with the deer-

hound at his heels came brushing over the dewy grass, it did not appear at all like a ghost or a vision, but as a real and contemporary inhabitant of these smiling lands.

For the moment it seemed as though the veil of the past was about to be lifted, and I had an agonising and breathless anxiety to question Thady Quin, to know about him, to be relieved, if only for a moment, of that intolerable and muffling ignorance that curtains the past. Speak to me, Thady! Tell me what you are and did, what you felt and suffered, what you ate, how you spoke, what thoughts you had as you walked on this morning nearly two centuries ago on the broad lands of Adare? And what would you think now if you saw it with my eyes instead of your own; what would you say to that imposing pile that has obliterated even the memory of the square house you built? What would you say to so much of your rich meadow-land being rolled and shaven into a golf-course? What would you think of the whirring of the motor-cars flying down the long avenue that you planted with such noble trees? Over these things you might shake your head; but the glossy coats of Desmond and Morganatic in the stud-farm hard by, the brood mares and yearling colts crowding in the paddock, and, above all, the tobacco plantation in the deer park, the ranks of fragrant leaves drying in the glasshouses and lofts, the model farm-buildings and the trim

houses—these would surely delight your soul, and make you feel that you had not lived in vain. What do you think of it all?

No answer from Thady; no Thady visible there any more; nothing but the empty green meadow. I felt suddenly lonely. But the morning wind stirred in the trees, the river murmured and modulated through its endless song, and a few withered leaves floated down on the burial-stone of some forgotten monk to remind me that it is from the things around them that men's thoughts take their colour and origin; that, in no very different way from that in which I dream and think now, this man also once thought and dreamt, and that his mind moved, like those minds that went before and those that came after, in the same cycle of life and death. . . . He is still walking about there with his deerhound and looking on the ground; but I shall see him no more.

VI

A MEMORY OF BEASTS

A MEMORY OF BEASTS

I

THE WISDOM OF SERPENTS

THE young July sun, shocked at the blackness hanging over the world of streets, made haste to mount above it; and as his beams, instantly climbing, topped the last range of clouds he looked down upon the Zoo and shone on the line of gaudy parrots that were picketed outside the lion house. As his glance touched these children of a sun-bathed land it kindled more brightly as though in glad recognition, while they in turn greeted him with a hoarse outburst of cries. They shrugged and plumed themselves, calling out in gross mockery of men's speech, and their dusty corner was transformed by the wizard's touch into a little vortex of life, and gladdened with colour and noise. The grotesque fowls, drunken with the sunshine, beckoned uncouthly and winked their circular eyes at me, calling out husky words of greeting; and I would gladly have stayed and bandied words with them, but my steps were bent towards a very different place. Out of all this merry life I plunged into the gloom of a museum where certain cold, clammy snakes were to be seen; the turnstile clicked behind

me, the screaming of the parrots died from my hearing, and I felt as though I had left life behind me.

For the condition of snake existence in captivity, as it appears to the casual observer, is as far removed from liveliness as it is from the stable desolation of death. And consider, a museum in a Zoo! I confess with shame that I am averse from museums, whether public or private, and that I have little taste for that cheerless kind of information which can only be studied in death and petrifaction. The peering antiquary may harvest a whole crop of knowledge from shards and flints, skulls and mummies; I have nothing but admiration for the patience and learning with which he is inspired: but for my part I desire to be absent from those dismal halls where the coughing caretaker plies her besom and the solitary visitor's footfall echoes along the dreary aisle. I believe I am not remarkable for this dislike, and it was a cunning thought of the authorities to house their serpents in this museum, and to add the obscure fascination of their low life to the attraction of the antiquities; without it, although Death makes a brave show, I fear he had known but few visitors there.

* * *

I sat alone for a little while amongst the slumbering reptiles. In two or three cages were coiled several feet of python, asleep; in others several feet

of boa-constrictor, asleep; here was a viper, there a rattlesnake, asleep; the Amblyrhynchus Cristatus, in spite of his name, slept not less profoundly than the simple alligator, and the Nilotic Monitor, as if to stultify his own profession, snored aloud in luxurious slumber. Flying foxes, that disdain the brightness of day, carry their principles of topsy-turvydom so far as to hang by the feet (asleep) from the roof of their cage until nightfall; they, like the rest of the company, seemed to mock at my wakefulness. Wherever I looked I could see evidence of nothing worthy the name of life. Stuffed birds and apes and tigers fixed me with the stare of their glass eyes; upon one side of me were cases of knives and implements that were discarded and obsolete thousands of years ago; upon another the skull of a murderer grinned at me from beneath its gibbet-cap. As a sane man in a madhouse begins to doubt his own sanity, I began presently to wonder whether I were really alive, or, more accurately, to wonder whether there were such a thing as Now. And, as I looked at the snakes, the propriety of their presence here became suddenly plain to me. In the brisk open-air world the dim flicker of their life would have seemed like death; here, amid the darkness of remote ages and the dust of death, the pale flame was clearly visible. I felt as though I had fallen through story after story in the unfinished structure of evolution, and now, after having looked out from the upper win-

dows, sat in the twilit basement of creation. For not only its place in the natural world, but its place in the earliest pages of recorded history, surrounds the serpent with a halo of importance and with the dank atmosphere of antiquity. It is but natural, and a supreme example of a common fallacy, that this reptile, which apparently does nothing but kill and eat and sleep, which has so mean an intelligence (or so gross a palate) that it will eat a blanket in mistake for a sheep, has from oldest time had a reputation for profound wisdom. How far that wisdom depends on the reptile's protracted slumbers; whether they grow wisest who sleep the deepest, and, as the Eastern philosophers teach, the highest state is achieved by contemplation and the forsaking of works; or whether it is a sign of wisdom to sleep long, it would be hard to say; but it is a fact that the earliest records of the serpent show him to us as both wise and sleeping. It was thus that Satan, wandering from Orontes to Darien, and from the Ob to the Indus, came upon that 'fittest imp of fraud' which he made his instrument; fast sleeping he found him,

> Not yet in horrid shade or dismal den,
> Nor nocent yet; but, on the grassy herb,
> Fearless unfeared he slept: in at his mouth
> The devil entered; and his brutal sense,
> In heart or head, possessing, soon inspired
> With act intelligential, but his sleep
> Disturbed not, waiting close the approach of morn.

The instrument of temptation makes also (imaged in the scared vision of an alcoholic brain) an excellent instrument of warning; and the curious may discover in the exhibition of snakes a new and highly moral significance.

* * *

It will be seen that my reflections in the serpent-house were not cheerful, and dismal indeed would have been my condition but for the timely arrival of the keeper, who invested the scene with much-needed commonplace. 'Serpents? No, there's nothing very strange about them; they're just the same as any other kind of beast—you mustn't play the fool with them. You see that python?' And he pointed to a cage in which a huge serpent lay 'in labyrinth of many a round self-rolled,' the slow respiration heaving along its body as an unbroken wave licks a ship's side. 'He was fed last night—had eight fowls, big ones too, and he'd have lapped up as many more as I'd have given him.'

'Dear me,' said I; 'a very large appetite.'

'Large, d'you say? Why, that's nothing at all. He'd eat twice as many more, and you and me and all. Rabbits we give them, and rats; and this chap'll have to get a pig or sheep or something to do him good. Alive? Yes, of course; but they kill them quicker than you or I could. They just curl round them and they're dead before you could say "knife."'

I said 'knife' under my breath, and tried to imagine the swiftness of the pig's death. 'How often are they fed?' I asked.

'About once a fortnight. This python was fed last night; if you come to-morrow you'll ask if it's the same one, it'll have swelled so much. It's the food doing him good. He'll hardly move now for a fortnight. You can touch this one if you like, and if you're quick enough about it.'

The impulse that leads one to dangle one's feet over a precipice made me accept the invitation. The keeper opened a tiny door in the python's cage, and, just within, the thickest part of the huge green coil was lying. I placed my hand on the quivering, shining skin, while the keeper watched the reptile's head. Suddenly 'That'll do. Wo! Billy,' said he, slamming the door as the snake raised its evil head and darted out a vibrating forked thread from between its jaws. 'Time to clear out when he lifts his head; he'd be out and have you in another second.'

'But doesn't it take a minute or two to unravel itself?' I asked, when I had recovered.

'A minute or two! Just about as long as it takes a fly to wink its eye—that's all the time he wants. He won't keep you waiting longer than that. They'd take me as soon as you, or anybody else. Clever? No, they're not clever. Snakes aren't as clever as they would be if they had more brains; their brains are too small. But they know

me all right—they know me by the rattle of my keys when I come to feed them. When I come in the dark sometimes I can hear that twenty-five foot python jumping about the cage like a good 'un, and I can't open the door sometimes to give him his meat. He'd go for me same as if I was a fowl; and when he's hungry I keep away—I should be afraid of being lapped up.'

We moved on to a cage of cobras. 'You think you could catch hold of one of those when they're obstropolous, but they're rum 'uns, I tell you.' Of the rattlesnakes he said, 'They'll never touch you without giving warning; if you hear the rattle you're all right; if you don't, you get the nick.'

With this ominous remark the keeper was about to leave me, but I had a question to ask him about snakes that I thought would embarrass him. The way had to be prepared cunningly.

'I suppose you know a good deal about snakes?' I asked, with studied carelessness. The man modestly replied that he thought he knew whatever was to be known on the subject. 'Do snakes ever swallow each other?' was my next question.

'Yes; I once had two pythons in a cage, one a few feet longer than the other. One morning when I came I found the big one alone, looking pretty fat, with the smaller one's head just peeping out of his mouth. But I made him fetch it up; I beat him with a switch from the tail upwards, and he

disgorged it inch by inch, and it wasn't a penny the worse.'

'In your opinion, as an expert,' I said, 'what would happen if three snakes caught hold of each other by the tails, in the form of circle, and began to eat each other?'

'Why, of course—m'm—*what* did you say, sir? In a circle? Oh, I see now. I'm hanged if it didn't puzzle me for a minute! You see, the first snake would swallow the others. What's that? Which is the first snake? Why, the one—of course, it's being swallowed itself, isn't it? Well, there *is* no first snake! Anyway, I've lived with snakes, and I've never seen them do that, or try to. You see, the last snake would be bound to swallow — no — well, I must be off, sir; good morning.'

He walked off scratching his head and muttering under his breath, leaving me to revise my notions about the activity of serpents while I gazed at the large python and said 'knife' to myself.

II

LORENZO

Whether one studies a beast or his human attendant, one's thoughts revolve in much the same circle of reflection. Lorenzo was not an elephant —he was a man; but long intercourse with the

greatest of creatures had brought his nature into accord with the solemn harmony of theirs. Time with his drag of years contributed to the stateliness of Lorenzo's mental habit, and when one had started him upon some path of narrative or dissertation he was neither to be tempted into unaccustomed byways, nor hurried, nor arrested in his course. In his own good time he would lead you round the track of memory and show you the sights; he was no more to be disturbed by his audience upon that voyage than was his oldest elephant, once set forth on her circular walk of penny entertainment, to be deflected by the cries of her riders as they drummed her unflinching hide. In the slow mill of his own mind he had ground up all his experience of life with the brute beasts into a kind of science—not a kind to be found in text-books, perhaps, but one that anchored him to an old philosophy. Probably he knew nothing of the Oriental schools, and yet he was a true, if a belated, follower of Vyasa. He seemed to aspire to the perfect repose of the Vedantist, who found in the science that contemplates changeless things the only possibility of elevation beyond change; and, like him, Lorenzo closed the gates of his soul, recalled his senses within himself, fed upon the past and future, and became absorbed in pious meditation.

I found him one afternoon seated on the hot-water pipes in front of Sally's cage, gazing at her in

a kind of dream. It was a quiet day, and very few people were in the house; there was little or no business being done in bell ringing or sweet catching, and the two veterans gazed at each other across the bars. I hesitated to break in upon the silent duet with my foolish questions; and although I was longing to hear the man talk about his charge, he gave me but little of the kind of gossip I wanted to hear. His mind was revolving questions of far vaster import: indeed, he almost resented my prying curiosity as to the private life of his beasts, and shielded them as though from the gaze of a mischievous busybody. What he did let fall, however, in the course of a few prefatory remarks (as to the nature of beasts generally) made before plunging into much deeper subjects, was to the points. 'Elephants are like people,' was his burden; 'show them much affection, and they'll take advantage of you when they can.' A cynic, you will observe; but it appears that he had excuses. There seems to be this great difference between the domestic as opposed to the wild animal—upon the one you may lavish affection and caresses, and he will love and respect you the more; but in the other, awe (which is the only really neutral ground upon which to make terms with a wild beast) and, in a less degree, affection diminish in proportion as you are demonstratively affectionate. We all know the man who must be kept at a distance lest he presume upon any little

kindness shown to him; that is the wild beast. The dog or the horse is like a friend or good servant who knows how to value your civility. Approach an elephant daily for three months with loud words and an indifferent bearing, and he will like you and be very much afraid of you at the end of the time; feed him upon candy for the same period, treat him tenderly, and he will hold himself at liberty to stamp on you some day when he has nothing better to do.

* * *

There is something admirable in the austerity of such a bond as that between Lorenzo and Sally. They had known each other for nearly thirty years; for half of that time, I dare say, she had been his chief interest in life, and yet how few caresses, how few words even, had passed between them! Their mutual understanding, her respectful dependence, his control, were alike perfect; although if he were not by and I were to enter her cage she would possibly kill me, I should not be afraid to lie down in her path and let her walk over me if he were beside her. Not very much afraid, I mean.

It was a constant effort, he told me, to refrain from petting so old a friend, and I can well believe it. He said, quite simply, 'If the animals were taken away from me, I think I should soon die;' but he was jealous of his influence, and made the effort. From one or two stories which he told me

I gathered that elephants are lovers of routine, and resent any interference with their daily custom. For example, my friend was in the habit of taking one of his elephants every morning to a brewhouse in the gardens, where the brute was used to have a drink of ale. For some reason, however (whether owing to the influence of some remote ripple of the teetotal movement or not I am unable to say), the practice was discontinued, and my lord arrived at the brewhouse one fine morning to find the door shut. Whereupon he raised a great boo-hooing, rushed through the gardens in an ecstacy of rage, and finally brought up in the middle of a lake, bellowing and trumpeting as though to the Hades of the beasts. The sequel to this exhibition is significant of man's relations with his jungle captive. The keeper went up to the enraged monster with a piece of bread, and led him submissive to his den. Where bullying fails with a beast one may successfully appeal to his gluttony, and with these two weapons one is armed *cap-à-pie* against the lower creation. Here were several tons of brute beast rushing about in a frenzy because of a disappointed thirst, and the remedy for it all lay in the palm of a man's hand. But listen to Mr. Lorenzo while he communicates some of the riper fruits of his experience.

'It's all make-believe with animals. They think you're stronger than you are. It's your business to keep that idea going; if they ever happen to find

out their mistake you've got to step out of the way to avoid trouble. It's astonishing how you can take elephants in. I can scare them as much with a straw as with a big stick. Their eyes magnify; they think the straw's a tree, and that you're a giant.'

This was evidently the starting-point of a loop-excursion from Mr. Lorenzo's path of dissertation, for he diverged upon speculations.

'It's my belief, you know, that all our eyes magnify. We think things are bigger than they are. I don't believe it's as far from here to America as we think it is.'

In my foolishness I suggested that the number of miles was known; and I have seldom been more confounded in argument than I was by his reply.

'Miles? What's a mile? I believe a mile isn't so long as we think it is, nor a yard, nor an inch. We magnify, and nothing's as big as it looks.'

I tried to consider this statement soberly, but I felt the whole ground of my beliefs rushing past me and swinging into space. But my companion gave me little time in which to exercise my amazed thoughts, for he was off again in a vein of reminiscence.

'You musn't disappoint an elephant. I remember once, when I was with a travelling menagerie, we had an elephant that used to shift the tents and carts about when we gave a performance, and when the work was done they used to take him to the

living-van and give him a loaf of bread. I told them it wouldn't do. I said "Drop that, or there'll be trouble over it; I never knew any good come of coddling elephants." Well, one Sunday morning we arrived at a village where we could get no bread; the baker's shop was shut, or something, and when the shifting work was done, off went the elephant as usual to the living-van. Some one tried to stop him going, but he shouldered through the crowd in a way that meant business. When he found there was no bread he took hold of the van and tipped it over and danced on it; and I guess there wasn't any less than fifty pounds' worth of damage done that morning. No, you musn't coddle them.'

* * *

Mr. Lorenzo was called away here to attend to the wants of some other of his charges, and I remained gazing at the monster before me, grim and grey like old Time—the very age of it made me tired. All round me, in the other cages, the business of feeding and cleaning was going forward; loaves of bread, enough to feed a multitude of men, were being wheeled about by the truck-load and distributed amongst the eager animals. Truly, as Montaigne said, we are the servants of our beasts; 'what carke and toile apply we not ourselves unto for their sakes;' a small army of men is paid to wait upon them, and it is a kind of homage that one renders before their cages. Even those who

come to scoff can hardly gaze for long at an elephant without being sobered and humbled. I was feeling very small indeed by the time my friend came back.

I was so fortunate as to stumble on Darwin's name during our conversation, and I fluttered it before him like a toreador's cloth.

'Darwin; ah! there you go; it's astonishing how ignorant people (no offence, sir) are misled by Darwin. Now Darwin was a very clever man —don't run away with the notion that he wasn't. But to my mind Darwin was a bit wrong. I've lived with animals; I know them; and I think Darwin got hold of the wrong end of the stick when he said we came from apes. Darwin said we've grown upward; I say no, we're growing downward.'

'Look at apes,' he went on. 'Do apes grow any more like men? If you go to Borneo you don't see men running wild in the ape forests, do you?' I confessed that the phenomenon had not, to my knowledge, been observed. 'Well,' triumphantly, 'and if man came from apes, you'd see a man walk out of the forest every now and then, and him or no one else not know where he'd come from. No, sir, man's growing downwards — downwards and eastwards.'

I staggered under the shock of this new complication. 'Eastwards?' I gasped.

'Yes, eastwards. The further East you go you

see men more like apes and beasts; they've all been like us once, and some day we'll be like them, and we'll go on going down and be apes, and oysters too, before we've done,'

I tried to lead him back to a less weird region of thought, but he had not yet finished.

'The human race is a wonderful thing. Men and women. It's my opinion women will be as good as men some day, when they get more exercise.' The Downward and Eastward theory flashed a contradiction across my mind, but I did not interrupt. 'A man has lots of exercise, but what does a woman do? Nothing, but down on her knees beside her dolly-tub.' And he made an inimitable scrubbing motion with his hands in the air. 'I believe in bicycles,' he said; and they'll make women every bit as good as men some day.' The word bicycle sat awkwardly on the tongue that had uttered things so strange and deep; moreover, it spoke loudly of the commonplace. And I preferred Mr. Lorenzo's conversation when it concerned his own familiar subjects; so, not without evident regret, he turned away from the promising field of generalities.

I heard but one more anecdote from him, and then he withdrew into silence, like the fowl in a cuckoo clock when the hour has been proclaimed. He told me how he brought Maharajah, an elephant of wide fame, from Edinburgh to Manchester. When Wombwell's menagerie was dispersed, this

elephant (one of the largest that has ever been brought to England) was purchased for the Belle Vue collection. The keeper led him to the railway-station, and embarked him in a great van; but the royal shoulders were shrugged, and the top of the van came off.

'We took to the road then, and marched southward, sleeping where we could.' I like the picture of great Maharajah and his keeper 'marching' along the wild North road; one can almost hear the tramp and shuffle of their feet, hour after hour, while the great and small figures move over the rolling moorland and pass under the silent, heather-clad hills. At one inn to which they came the landlord, although doubtless a devout Scotsman, refused to accommodate the behemoth, and desired that he should be removed from before the door.

'I'll have no such uncanny beastie about the place—take it away, man.'

The keeper suggested the stable, but the landlord snorted.

'Ye couldn't get it in—take it away.' A gallon of beer was bet upon the issue, and Maharajah, at his master's bidding, knelt down and shuffled into the stable, taking the doorposts with him. The landlord still objected; but, said the keeper, 'Very well; I've put him in—you get him out.' Mine host's authority failed him here, and upon the bet being liquidated amity was restored.

Maharajah died of consumption years ago at

Belle Vue, but the place still resounds with his fame; the awe in which he was held still lingered in the voices that spoke of him. Mr. Lorenzo told me that I should find his skeleton in the museum; and thither, having taken leave of my friend, and thanked him for his discourse, I went, as to a shrine. I regarded, not without emotion, the vast ruinous framework supported by iron girders in the posture of life; I passed my hand over the great bleached bones, and in fancy saw them clothed upon with a bulk of living flesh. It is a strange thought, thus to make of the dead his own monument; a strange event that this grim creature, ravished from his far-off home to be a show for multitudes, should even in death have the privacy of the grave denied to his bones. There he stands, an outlined mockery or a noble monument—which you will. But even when his own fame is dead (and these bones shall long outlast it) his huge ruins may commemorate the prowess of Mr. Lorenzo, his good friend and brother, who has in his turn escaped from a derelict race that even now plunges downward and eastward to destruction.

III

ROYAL PRISONERS

The lions and tigers knew quite as well as we who stood in a throng before their cages that the hour of dinner was passing, and almost on the

stroke of half-past three—the time advertised as their dinner-hour—they roused themselves and began to walk uneasily about their cages. As the minutes passed and no dinner appeared, the ranks of people before the cages grew longer and deeper, until at last the lion-house was packed with an expectant crowd. Few things are so disquieting as to sit in momentary expectation of a delayed meal; and as the hungry (and therefore irritable) man will hardly suffer himself to speak lest his ear should miss the first murmur of the gong, so these hungry brutes dare scarcely turn their backs on the cage door, and in their impatient walk went past it very slowly and hurried through the remaining two-thirds of the circle. There were several false alarms, as when certain little boys who had been hovering about the outside door watching for the keeper, charged back through the ranks of spectators and took up a commanding position before the first cage; these, although they succeeded in sharpening the suspense of the crowd, did not at all deceive the beasts, who have their own ways of knowing when the keeper is near.

As at a play when the curtain delays its rising, the chattering and ejaculation gradually faded into the deep silence of expectancy. One would have thought that some great drama was about to begin. Presently the three tigers at the upper end of the house stopped in the middle of their fretting ambulation and looked towards the back of their

cages. Some far-away sound of a key turning in a lock, inaudible to us, floated upon their sensitive ears; but as yet nothing happened. The lions in the next cage continued to walk round and round, and far away at the other end of the house some impatient youngsters began to roar; only the large tiger still stood waiting with glowing eyes and quivering tail. At last there was a rattling noise behind his cage; every beast heard it and began to leap; the crowd heard it too, and surged in a body before cage number one. The iron gate of the tiger's sleeping place was lowered from beneath the cage; he bounded into the narrow chamber; the door was closed, and he crouched snarling at the keeper. A large lump of red flesh was thrown beneath the further bars, and in the twinkling of an eye caught in the cruel claws, carefully smelt, and then gripped and crunched and bolted. The same performance was gone through in every cage, the crowd wildly surging in front of each successively; mothers held up their babies, children cried and whined, old men and women pushed and struggled for a good view; and the last thing I saw as I left the house was a fond father collecting his young family round him, and perching his tender babes on the railings where they might feast their eyes upon the bloody spectacle.

* * *

The taming or rather the subduing of passion in lions and tigers is a subject that interests everybody, and I was at some pains to find out what are the methods and limits of the art. A man who attends to some of these large cats took me round with him and introduced me to each of his charges, and I am bound to say that I was not politely received. We began with the tigers. The first two snarled and glared when we approached the bars; they knew the keeper, but they would have none of me; with him they keep up a kind of distant acquaintance, but he never goes within reach of their claws. In the next cage is Toby, a magnificent Bengal tiger that the keeper has reared from cubhood. 'Hallo, Toby,' said he, and the great and fearful beast leaped noiselessly down from the shelf on which he had been sleeping and came up to the bars, holding his face against them and purring loudly while the man rubbed the broad flat nose.

'As you and he are such chums,' said I, 'I suppose you often go into his cage?'

'Me? Not much. I've no wish for being clawed up, and you can never trust them. They may seem right enough and friendly enough for years, but you never know the day when they'll up and go for you. No, Toby and me are very good friends, but I don't see the fun of risking my neck by overdoing it.'

The beautiful savage face was still rubbing

against the bars, and I ventured, diffidently enough, to scratch Mr. Toby myself. The loud purring stopped somewhat suddenly, the eyes gleamed a little brighter, and, as I scratched, the broad head was slowly raised until my fingers were in front of the mouth. Advised by the keeper, I withdrew them hastily at this point, and it was just as well; a minute longer and I had lacked a finger to-day.

My next introduction was to Wallace, one of the largest lions in England. He was so obliging as to stand up and stretch himself for my benefit, tearing and clawing at a pole which the keeper inserted high up in the bars; and in this position he has a reach of nearly ten feet. There is no very good feeling between him and his keeper; and later in the day I saw the lion do to a galvanised iron bucket inadvertently left in his cage what he would willingly have done to the man. He tore a hole in the bucket in thirty seconds, and in as many minutes the galvanised iron plates were torn and twisted and crumpled like a dozen pieces of waste paper.

'Do you see that lion?' said my guide, pointing to a wicked-looking African; 'he's a nowty one, and no mistake. Bred in the gardens that one is; and I'll back them for savageness above any. I'd rather have to do with a dozen forest-bred ones than one that's been born in captivity. The wild ones are more afraid of man—they've had good

reason to be—but there's no doing anything with these home-raised ones. Now these three young ones' (taking me to a cage where two half-grown lionesses and a lion were taking an afternoon doze) 'were caught and brought over young; I can go into their cage and they'll take no notice of me; they're as quiet as lambs; but mind she doesn't reach for you,' he said, as I stroked the head of the nearest lioness.

* * *

This distrust of all the larger animals of the cat tribe, even on the part of the man who lives with them, is constant; there is no such thing as security in their good behaviour or certainty in their affections. In the panther and leopard house much the same performance was gone through, only here the beasts were even more savage; some of them, on the approach of the keeper, rushed fuming and snarling at the bars, gnashing their teeth and quivering with fury. 'That looks a quiet one,' said I, pointing to a jaguar; 'he's docile enough, isn't he?'

'That's just where you make a mistake; you mustn't go by looks, or you'll find yourself in trouble. I dare say that'll be the nowtiest of the whole lot; very nasty she is. Now this leopard, although leopards are noted for fierceness, is as gentle as a kitten. See her come running to the bars when I call her.' The beast arched its back,

and purred and waved its tail; but it had an eye that I would not have trusted for worlds. 'Now pumas are generally reckoned to be quiet beasts, but this one's regularly nowty; go for you in a minute.' And so on. The engaging little ways of each animal in turn were explained to me, and the extent of its 'nowtiness.' From certain observations made by me unaided I perceived that as a rule the more penetrating the bouquet that surrounds an animal the greater its 'nowtiness,' and that when you feel inclined to hurry by an animal's cage you may take it that he is 'nowty.'

From the atmosphere of 'nowtiness' I was glad to emerge into fresh air; but I was somewhat saddened because one of my oldest beliefs had been shaken. It appears that the lion is not the king of beasts.

I put it to the keeper, was the lion king, and he said, 'I'd put my money on tigers; they're quicker.'

Every one else who understands these beasts gives me the same disturbing news, and my friend told me that one night he carelessly left open a sliding door between the cages of a tiger and a big lioness, and that in the morning there was no lioness, but only a fat tiger. I am not at all grateful for this enlightenment; and if what they say is true, why is one deceived in infancy? I turn up 'lion' in my earliest spelling-book, and I read :—

'The li-on is the king of an-i-mals. Hark, how he roars! Ned and Ben, keep a-way from him or he will eat you up, and a fat ox too. He has a great mane and is a fine fel-low.' But I find no article upon tigers—their very name is ignored.

* * *

Since the keeper could give me no comfort on this head, and was reticent of blood-curdling anecdotes, I suddenly thought of my excellent friend Mr. Lorenzo, he who had been in his time a professional lion-tamer and had played the part of Daniel a thousand times. I went to Mr. Lorenzo, and he once more charmed me with the wonders of his discourse and the freshness of his imaginings. I say 'imaginings' from a despicable desire to have a foot on either side of the fence; for I confess that Mr. Lorenzo was a prophet without much honour in his own country, and it had been whispered to me that his fancy had strong wings. But bald truth is after all a poor thing in comparison with such gifts as endowed Mr. Lorenzo; he was an inexhaustible fountain spouting generous streams of narrative and fantasy. And as for his beast-taming reminiscences, I choose to believe them, for have I not in my possession a faded but still gorgeous show-bill of Wombwell's menagerie that was printed before I was born, and that sets forth by word and picture the brave acts of Mr. Lorenzo? He is described as 'opening the jaws of tigers the one moment, lying down with them the

next, causing lions to leap through fiery hoops, feeding untameable hyenas from the naked hand; these are scenes which no wonder-lover would care to miss; but when the finishing scene takes place, Lorenzo defying, fighting, and bringing to bay five monster lions, it is a feat unequalled or attempted even in the days of the great Van Ambrugh.'

On the same bill I read that 'Lorenzo's performances fully exemplify that physical power and daring is one half of our national greatness,' that 'they further exemplify that human grandeur is rooted in the flesh,' and that it is 'Lorenzo's spirit that has made Britain what it is.' If these things are so (and surely a show-bill cannot lie), I have abundant reason to believe in my friend.

I could fill a book with the things that he communicated to me out of the ripe fruits of his experience; I see it already in imagination; one might call it *The Showman's Scrip*, or, say, *The Wisdom of Lorenzo: A Tamer's Testament.* Here are a few examples culled from its pages. Speaking of his old profession, Mr. Lorenzo said:

Lion-taming is a business; we are made, not born.

Evolved would have been a better word for the inventor of the Downward and Eastward theory. Courage is, in his opinion, not so much a quality inherent in the blood as a business qualification to be acquired or (let us be consistent) evolved; for he says *Courage is cleverness first and a firm will*

afterwards. And he is no boaster of his own temerity, for, speaking of a performance he gave before the late Queen Victoria and an extremely select audience, he said:

I can stand a lion or two; but empty seats are a terror. And he admitted that 'an old lady who steps into a train that travels at sixty miles an hour is tempting a fiercer devil than I ever faced in my life.' And consider this bright flower of experience from a man whose business it had been to study the spite and cunning of the brutes:

A real man is the artfullest thing in all creation: a tiger can't hold a candle to a man for spitefulness.

For the quelling of beasts he relied simply upon his tact, his voice, and that blend of cleverness and will which we call courage; *The whip is for the audience—not for the beast.* And it appears that the boasted taming and training of fierce beasts is, in Mr. Lorenzo's opinion, an unnecessary part of the showman's art; he holds that *what you must do is not train your beasts so much as train your man.* Indeed, Mr. Lorenzo does not believe in the so-called taming of the fiercer cats, for he sums up his experience in these words:

There never was, there isn't now, and there never will be a really tame lion or tiger on this earth; you cannot trust the best of them for one hour.

Now, the rest of Mr. Lorenzo's acts; how he fought with a caged lion who pinned him by the arm, and escaped victorious; how, by the daily

introduction of a straw-stuffed suit of clothes into a wild tiger's cage, he taught the tiger that all men are made of straw and not worth a wild beast's notice; are they not written and buried in the files of ancient newspapers? I wish they were not, for otherwise I might have filled a volume with the tale of his greatness. Here was a Johnson; but the willing Boswell had been forestalled.

IV

FROM BROBDINGNAG TO LILLIPUT

The elephant, bored almost to an ecstacy, shrugged alternate shoulders: the shoulders swayed the great shabby head and trunk; the head rocked the body in a swinging, sideways motion, until the whole elephant pitched and rolled like an anchored ship in a seaway.

Two small children stood aghast before her, shocked into silence at the sight of so vast a creature. When at length tongues were found, they vibrated to a lively measure, discussing the advisability of contributing a penny for insertion in the automatic biscuit-box. The debate was exhaustive; it included estimates for expenditure on monkey-nuts, and touched upon a naval budget in connection with maritime adventure on the lake. But at last the penny was voted, and held out to the elephant in a small hand that trembled a

good deal—there was apprehension lest 'it' should bite.

The coin rattled into the box, but, alas! no cake fell into the bowl. Here was something like a tragedy; the loss of the penny was bad enough, but the loss of confidence in animal sagacity was much worse—there lay the real trouble. No explanation about faulty mechanism was accepted; the one idea in those children's minds was that the elephant had played them false.

Clearly it was a case for diplomacy. An onlooker concealed two pennies in his hand, and gave the elephant one of them while he pretended to pat her trunk, asking her at the same time to return the children's penny. His coin was put into the machine without the children seeing it; the trunk was inserted in the empty bowl, and stretched out to him for another penny. It was then an easy matter (as the conjuring books say) to produce the second coin as though the elephant had brought it from the box, and to return it to the children with her compliments. Thus pleasure dawned on two clouded faces, and in two busy minds confidence in the works of nature was restored.

This, after all, is one great use of a zoological collection — to keep lively one's faith in nature. The Zoo offers to untravelled people an earnest of what is kept in stone for the enterprising and fortunate; in addition, it helps to keep one humble.

Matthew Henry says of the behemoth described in the Book of Job that 'this mountain of a beast, this overgrown animal is set before us not merely as a show to satisfy our curiosity, but as an argument with us to humble ourselves'; but I think that the sight of the show elephant has its own lessons, not less significant than those referred to by the pious commentator. There, behind wooden bars, stands the creature about whom sublime words have been written; and although he abases himself to a certain extent, there is figurative truth in the actually mistaken statement of an old book on natural history that 'olefaunte boweth not the knees.' To careless eyes he may cut a grotesque enough figure as he shuffles and sidles in his malodorous den; but what of man, the lord of creation, who stands facing him beyond the bars, venting his cheap witticisms? When one look at him and is tempted to blush for one's species, there is but little to uplift one in the boast of Sophocles, 'He masters by his devices the tenant of the fields.'

For my part, I cannot look at an elephant without being reminded of a younger world, or rather of that vast world of dreams and fantasies wherein things are on a grande scale and Time slows his pace to a stately march. The wide-eyed, meditative simplicity of Hebrew poetry furnishes the true expression of the feeling, and the sight of a caged elephant recalls some of that dignified poetry with a painful sense of contrast. *Chief of the ways*

of God was a sublime title, but behemoth must stand for long years in man's captivity; instead of 'under the shady trees, the covert of the reed and fens,' his place is under a whitewashed roof, his bed a stone floor; and although 'he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth,' he must (if he would drink) make shift with a bucket and a hosepipe. These are our 'devices'; and far be it from me (who benefit by them) to deny their ingenuity. But I am not comforted, and I could have wept to see an old elephant, with a greed born of nothing but enforced idleness, holding her mouth wide open while the multitude, with cries of derision, threw cakes and nuts and cigar ends into the gaping cavern.

Poor old Sally! Her hide was rubbed and shabby with hard wear; she had lived for sixty years, and her keeper allotted to her the human span of life; perhaps, by reason of strength she might attain to the fourscore limit, but it was labour and sorrow. How many feet had loitered before her cage, how many wondering faces had gazed into her sad eyes; how often must she have heard the same trite remarks, the same poor jests! We may hope that she had no memories of days when, a little grey calf, she wandered at her mother's feet through the melodious silence of a Ceylon forest.

* * *

The short journey from an elephant-house to the place of monkeys leads one to a new world. When you have been looking at a landscape through a field-glass and suddenly reverse the glass your ideas of proportion do not suffer a greater shock than they do when, forsaking the contemplation of great beasts, you turn your eyes on a small world of apes. I had felt small and insignificant a moment before; now, when I stood in front of the large cage in the monkey-house, I felt as though I had swelled suddenly to great bigness and clumsiness. In my hand was an offering in the shape of a packet of raisins.

Presently a very old and grim ape, knowing well what was in it, came and sat down over against me in a corner of the cage, his eyes bulging with desire; he raised and twitched his bushy brows, and stared me down with astounding impudence. He had golden-brown eyes that moved and glittered over the blue corrugations of his dog-like face, and as he fixed me with his gaze I felt as though the eddies of Time had laid hold of me and were drawing me down to a nether void. There is one supreme reflection for a man in such a position; it was a commonplace hundreds of years ago; yet (in some form or other) it recurs to every student of monkeys with humiliating persistence—

'Simia, quam similis, turpissima bestia, nobis!'

And it is the gist of the whole matter. If I were

to write a dozen pages I could say nothing more pertinent or more convincing.

When you first look at the gibbering, antic crowd, the commotion seems like Bedlam; you are confounded by the shrill chatter and swift behaviour of the apes. Yet in a little while one begins to trace some order in the apparent confusion, to find some purpose in the activity of the crowd. Out of the fog of sound and movement the outline of a polity begins to emerge, and presently the chief features of government in an ape community become visible. You find that the supreme right is not that of might, that there is a traditional supremacy of one class over another, that there is a place for the bravo and the prig no less than for the veteran and the athlete. That small and wan monkey from whose very mouth the morsel was snatched by a rude and strong hand is not condemned to bear the full burden of physical insignificance; he has his compensations, his powers of redress. Watch him as he runs whining from the bully, to play in his turn the same part; there is another and larger species than his over which he is morally supreme, and as he walks quietly up to a monkey of this tribe it drops a cake and flees. That ape (the dog-faced), although physically at the mercy of all the other tribes, has its rock of strength in an advanced civilisation, an *esprit de corps* which binds its members together in a common force, furthering and protecting the common

interests. *The compensation for Injustice*, says the Pilgrim's Scrip, *is that in that dark Ordeal we gather the worthiest around us ;* and our dog-nosed friend, who fled so readily from the small bully, sat aloft on a bar surrounded by loyal comrades—worthy, I have no doubt, although their virtues were not martial.

* * *

One has the idea that the attendant of animals such as these must spend much time in studying their habits, but it is surprising to find how much time a man may spend with them and how little he may really see. I think that the keeper of the monkey-house would have been a naturalist if he could, but, as he said, 'when you have to be scrubbing and scouring and sweeping and getting food ready all day long, you don't have much time to sit and watch the monkeys.' But he was aware of the opportunities which he neglected, for he admitted that if only he had the time he would gladly spend hours in watching his fascinating charges. The great cry of all keepers is that they get 'used' to the beasts, and then (in many cases) their interest dies.

'Apes are very much like men,' said the keeper, echoing another sentiment common to all his fellows ; 'they have their manners and customs, just like us.'

I can never become used to this frame of mind,

which is eternally surprised that nature should have thought fit to endow other creatures than ourselves with reasonable qualities. I find nothing to surprise me in the wisdom of the ant or the elephant; what does surprise me is that men need mills and machinery to imitate badly such work as a bird can do with its beak and a few fragments of grass and twig. But I dare say my position is only at one remove from the keeper's, and that a series of philosophic somersaults would still land me in one of the two positions—surprise at man's wisdom in comparison with that of the beasts, or at his ignorance.

Discipline, rather than industry, seems to be the feature of ape government. 'When they live in numbers together, as they do here,' said an attendant, 'they soon find out who's master and who won't stand any hanky-panky. You'd laugh if you could see when we put a new monkey in the cage. It's like a new boy at school. All the others come round it and pull it about and see what it's made of—you'd think they were asking its name and what its father was. And some of them, more friendly than the rest, take it around and show it the ropes, and where to draw the water out of the well—there isn't a thing that monkey doesn't know in two days. Some people like them for pets. I don't. These little ones make the best pets, but I shouldn't like to have one in my house; they're a bit too busy for my taste.

I should want to have them tied up in the yard, same as a dog. And mind you,' he continued, 'those little ones with the sad, white faces, that look as if they weren't long for this world—they're the beggars to fight. They'll master those big handsome fellows with the yellow faces (dog-faced apes we call them) in no time. Look at that, now!'

A big monkey with a blue face, and a thing like an orange-coloured brain to sit on, ventured cautiously into what was evidently the 'beat' of one of the small, angelic tribe, who was receiving sugar-plums from some delighted children. The large ape looked round with apprehension, and then stretched forth its arm to a woman who offered it a cake. At that moment it was observed by the small ape, who dropped what was in its own hand and rushed at the intruder. There was a very fast race along the upper bars, and a dismal screaming at the other end indicated that punishment had been administered. Then the little ape came back, and, sitting down before a group of newly-arrived people, turned up its eyes and began to cough consumptively.

V

THE DAY'S WORK

All day long in the houses of the beasts a routine goes forward which is only slightly affected

by the presence or absence of visitors. Imprisoned for life, they have found it necessary to invent some means of passing the time; they have their occupations and amusements, their hours of business and idleness, and—need one deny it?—their thoughts and meditations. Whether you are there to see him or not, the peacock at intervals spreads his gaudy fan and struts about to admire himself; the stork stoops for hours over his well of water, gazing fondly like Narcissus at the rippling image; the seals in their echoing house talk to one another of pools and rocks, of brown seaweeds and cold, green waters, while they wriggle tirelessly on the bend of their fins along the dripping slab. The brown bear (I always think of him as a sailor) paces round and round his pit with an ungainly roll; anon he climbs aloft to his crow's nest, where, with shaded eyes, he looks at the weather and sniffs the wind; and anon he hands himself down again and takes his watch below in the stuffy fo'c'sle that is provided for him, When time hangs heavy on the paws of the kangaroo he can wrestle and box with his companion; twice I saw one interesting creature get well home with his left and send his opponent to grass, or rather to sawdust; and when the boxing or wrestling was over the wrestlers hopped and bowed opposite to each other with hops that rose very high and advanced very little. The birds in the aviary, long after nesting time is past

and their young ones are grown up, continue to weave and build model nests which they have no sooner finished than they pull them to pieces again. The camel, since there are no date palms at which he may exercise his long neck, gnaws and chews at the roof of his house, and when he is tired of that he slews his head round like a steam crane and throws hay and dust on his hump.

For the yak and the cow and similar ruminants nature has provided an endless occupation which seems to be absolutely satisfactory, for I have never seen them look bored. The lion has his hours for exercise and rest; you may see him rise and do his allotted number of turns round the cage, and then lie down again; he has his playtime too, and will chase a piece of wood round the den for an hour at a time. The monkeys alone feel the constraint of captivity so little that they have no need to kill time; the care of government and the securing of provisions keep them busy. Of course they amuse themselves, but their amusements do not always bear investigation, and are by no means so primitive as those of the other beasts. Such toys as they have are mechanical and highly elaborate; and while a tiger is content to play for hours with a wooden ball, the ape must have his see-saw and his village pump.

But one may spend hours with the beasts, studying them and their ways, without considering

that they also may have their opinions about our own conduct. Undoubtedly they have ample opportunity for forming those opinions, and I think that in many cases the beasts betray them. I stood in the lion-house at dusk, when it was empty of visitors, and watched a lion that was standing close to the bars, gazing into the heart of the sunset. His eyes burned and glowed in the red light; not a wink nor a twitch of the eyelids disturbed the fixity of his gaze. I passed before him and stood in his line of vision, but still he did not move a muscle, not a hair on his face was disturbed. He looked right through me as though I had not been there, and as if he were absolutely unconscious of my presence. There was something almost solemn in the grandeur and dignity of his attitude. Was he celebrating some religious rite, that he rose from his lair and stood in meditation at the evening hour? Or was it merely a fit of melancholy that made him thus regard the sun of his freedom and of his captivity? He must often have watched the suns that set over the rolling plains of his native land; and yet there was something more mysterious than reminiscence in his salute, something of worship, something of melancholy, immemorial concern.

* * *

We are indeed held in a kind of indulgent contempt; some of the animals will show irritation

and some a mild pleasure at our presence; few go so far as to betray anger or joy. A crowd of us may stand looking into the pit where dwell the Polar bears, and they will not take the trouble to glance up; round and round the slippery edge of their pond they walk, exquisitely clean and dainty: and though one or two of us throw biscuits into the pond, the brutes will not trouble to take the plunge until a sufficient amount of provender has been collected in the water. It is the same with the hippopotamus. He lies snoring and bubbling in his tank, a pattern of sloth, until the crowd collecting in front of his den is large enough to make it worth his while to struggle out of the bath. Then he stands with his huge mouth agape, and is so kind as to permit us to cast our fragments into it. The rhinoceros is feared and disliked, yet he has found that if he thrusts out his snout between the bars of his den some intrepid visitor will think it a proud thing to be allowed to scratch it for him. The beasts simply tolerate and make use of their visitors, and I think they sometimes laugh at them.

With the ape and the elephant we are, more or less, on terms; it is an understood thing that we feed them; there is a certain amount of civility (if not of cordiality) in our relations; but let us go empty-handed to their dwelling and we are ignored. And the monkeys, at least, vary their behaviour to us according to the food we bring them. The

raisins are much the most successful introduction to the apes, and, indeed, this particular food appeals to by far the greater portion of the animals in a Zoo. The water birds like them and so do the kangaroos; the rats and the bears, the hogs and the marmosets, the elephants and the parrots, greedily devour this delicacy. As for the apes, they have a passion for raisins; they are so surfeited with nuts and buns that, if you make such an offering, they will (as likely as not) cast it back in your face. And if you wish really to insult the average monkey, offer him a monkey-nut.

* * *

As I was passing through the gardens on my way to the gate I saw a ring of people grouped round Sally and Mr. Lorenzo, who were just about finishing the solemn antics that consituted their daily performance. The sage appeared to be making a speech, and presently the elephant began to walk round the edge of the crowd, insinuating her trunk amongst the ranks of people, and handing to her master the coins thus collected. This was as it should be; the elephant did not know how mean were the coins she accepted, so she could take them without compromising her dignity, and Mr. Lorenzo stood behind her, merely acting as receiver. Soon the coins came too fast for Sally, and Mr. Lorenzo's assistants had to lend their aid; still the Wise Man stood apart, smiling benignantly.

But presently some one threw a coin into the arena, and the sage, fearing to lose it, stooped and picked it up. I was shocked to see him thus defile himself with the lucre, but worse was to come; for as more and more coins were thrown into the ring, I had the pain of seeing the Fountain of Wisdom, dignity abandoned, leap and skip after the sordid emblems; he laid age aside, and grubbed in the earth for the falling coins with an ape's agility; he sprang hither and hither after the rolling halfpence. Alas! alas! And when the pennies had all been harvested and the crowd was already melting away, I saw Lorenzo and his great companion wending their way slowly homewards. The sage, no longer agile, his pockets bursting with copper, walked with bended back at a deliberate pace, and the elephant shuffled beside him with weary steps, turning towards him as though comparing notes with him upon the day's business. I do not know why I should have pitied them, but something in their gait took me by the heart as they disappeared into the deepening dusk; the sight was at once majestic and pathetic: one was reminded of a Twilight of the Gods.

* * *

And it is at the end of the day that the little world of animal life at the Zoo has its good hours. The kindly night drops down upon the beasts, the darkness shelters them; captivity cannot deprive

them of this birthright shared by all living creatures. Gradually the visitors depart, the keepers finish their tasks, the beds are made for the night, and the lights are put out. The beasts lie down in primitive innocence, their cunning and treachery laid aside, and only the scuttling of rats and mice, the croak of a wakeful bird, or the movement of some restless sleeper disturbs the silence and peace which are a promise of that longer night and deeper, dreamless sleep that wait to enfold the wildest of them.

VII

THE PICCADILLY SYMPHONY

THE PICCADILLY SYMPHONY

FROM a bedroom high over Piccadilly and just beyond the dip where the traffic in either direction hurries forward to take the slippery rise I used to hear the sounds of the street come up to me every night and morning. They were the last sounds to penetrate through the thickening blanket-folds of sleep; they were the first sensations to which I awoke; and often through the night (for they were never quite silent) they flowed along with my dreams like ripples on a tide. When I returned after an absence and heard them again they were at first disturbing; they assaulted the hearing in a prolonged succession of detached and discordant noises. But after a little while they began to weave themselves into something whole and definite; they became not a hundred sounds, but one sound; not a hundred discords, but one harmony. I know it now, this seeming medley of violent tappings and rumblings and mechanical noises, for something much more interesting and wonderful than that; I know it for a concord or symphony in which a thousand harsh notes are merged into one mellow note, in which units become unity—a symphony of traffic upon a road. And as you may write music in various modes,

Dorian, Lydian, Phrygian, pure or mixed, so the symphony of traffic writes itself in one or other of the various modes that govern it. There is the mode of the Embankment, with its lurching *tempo* caused by the uneven surface, its vans and hansoms, its motor-cars hurrying the broker to his broking and the financier to his finance. There is the mode of Leadenhall Street, where through the narrow fissure of packed city life the sound of horses' feet is veiled by the beating of thousands of brisker human feet. There is the mode of the Clerkenwell Road, humble and muddy, with its tramcars and its ring of steel shoes on granite setts. There is the mode of the Strand, a grand minor harmony that sweeps along in its full tide, a laborious human counterpart to the quiet river that flows in brown and silver a little way below it. There is the mode of Hill Street, delicate and ornate, where all the movements are quick, whether of stepping horses or gliding electromobiles; and there is the mode of Piccadilly, unchanging and unforgettable, with its note of restless eagerness and hurry, its undecided tonality as of a passage from one point to another of things that have no abiding or continuing city, but seek one East or West.

* * *

This symphony of Piccadilly, which continues throughout the days and years, has a daily beginning and ending; but I have never attended to it

late enough or waked early enough to be sure when it ends; and although I have often in the small hours heard the *adagio* of its introduction I have never heard the first notes. It begins and ends in falling detached notes, and in the summer there is not more than three-quarters of an hour between its ending and its beginning. It ends on home-going 'buses, belated cabs and carriages; it begins with market carts, steam waggons, and the swish of hydraulic hose-pipes. Somewhere about half-past four or five o'clock there is a lull; for although the end of one of London's working days far overlaps the beginning of another, and the market carts have begun to come in long before the last cab or carriage has carried home its late cargo, the symphony itself, the body of sound that has a definite beginning and ending, is governed by laws different from, if no less obscure than, those which send the morning carts eastward and the homing night-cabs westward. The lull that comes at half-past four comes after the introduction to the symphony of a new day; it is a pause after which comes the *allegro* that beats like a surf on the shores of sleep, and to which I used to listen in the half-hour before I got up. But just before it, in the pause that follows the slow detached notes of the introduction, there is one happy moment in which the cool chorus of the skies breaks in on the tortured orchestra of the streets. In that hour, even from a Piccadilly bedroom, you hear the birds singing in the Green

Park. It is their only chance, because the increasing tide of traffic soon swells and drowns their notes. Every morning that I was awake in time I listened for this sweet *intermezzo;* and by the degree of joy in it I could tell, long before the curtains were drawn and the light had come into the room, whether the sun was shining or not.

* * *

The sounds that make up this orchestra of traffic are very clear and definite when one listens to them thus, with the sense of hearing unconfused by the sense of sight. The predominant note, the clip-clop of horses' feet on the wood pavement, is daily decreasing, gradually displaced by the curious drone of the motor omnibus. The groundwork of the whole symphony, the four-part harmony, is still, however, furnished by the common horse 'bus, with its low rumble of wheels and dull clatter of eight steel shoes on the wood. But a very interesting tone, and one which remarkably brightens the whole volume of sound as it rises, is the jingle of the collar chains on the horse 'buses. This noise, which is universal and pervading, furnishes a sharp, bright sound as high as the chirping of sparrows, and much higher than the bells on the cab horses, which are the next highest sound in the orchestra. In brightening effect it is like the mixture-stops of an organ, which are tuned to

harmonics high above the diapason of tone, and add lightness and brightness to the whole. When the horse 'buses shall have finally disappeared, the symphony of Piccadilly will have a deeper, harsher, and more sombre tonality. The noise of the motor omnibus, so dreadful when heard close by, is not without its proper part in the harmony, as it floats to a point high above the street; but it is already out of proportion to the other sounds, and as the number of motor vehicles increases it will certainly mar the tone of the orchestra. The sound will then be like that of an orchestra that has too much brass in it and too little wood-wind. For the steel shoes striking the wooden pavement give at a distance an effect corresponding to wood-wind; and there is a whole gamut of notes from them, as from a wooden dulcimer. The smaller motors, with their rhythmic beats and buzzings, give the string tone, and as they increase in number through the morning add greatly to the mellowness of tone. The large motor omnibuses, in addition to their long, brassy notes, furnish, if they are badly driven, a very fine side-drum effect when, on going up the hill to Hyde Park Corner, the driver misses his change of gear, and the gear-pinions jar and grind. The notes of motor-horns detach themselves altogether from the general harmony, being too short and abrupt to be absorbed into the fabric of sound; although a dreadful day may come when they will be so many and so loud that they will make a

sound-fabric of their own. But in that day Piccadilly bedrooms will be deserted.

* * *

It is changing, of course, this symphony, changing in tone and *tempo*, getting harsher and faster with the years. But it changes so gradually, one instrument in the orchestra at a time being withdrawn and a new one sounding in its place, that one can think of it almost as an endless thing. It has sounded there now for so many years; it will go on sounding for so many more; and one by one the old noises will drop away and new ones take their places; but still the volume will go on and increase from one half-century to another, though at the beginning of one half-century there is hardly an ear to listen to it that heard it at the beginning of the last. The sense of sound is a wonderful aid to one's sense of continuity in the world. The sound of the sea, that was and is and will be; the sound of wind in trees; the speech and language of men; the noise of traffic in the streets—these are things that go on like a river, and help to carry our thoughts and hopes into the future. If the changes of some things trouble us, there are always other things that do not change very much; the noise of sea-waves will be as beautiful in a thousand years as it is now, and no combining of capitalists or developments in the world of science will change

its tune by a note. And if the symphony in Piccadilly is doomed to change and deteriorate, and grow harsher and louder, there is still above it that chorus of the tree-tops that sang in the beginning, sings on still, and will for ever sing. The harsher symphony of human industry and enterprise may frighten it away from Piccadilly; but it will still be singing in some quieter place, in primitive tune and cadence.

VIII
PRAISE OF THE RAILWAY

PRAISE OF THE RAILWAY

THE wonder and pomp of railways is already on the wane; the sense of ponderous dignity that erected the monstrous portals of Euston Station and the thrilling excitement that inspired Frith's picture exist now only in the breasts of children; tricky things like electricity and motor-cars, and even aeroplanes, are already threatening that vast solidity which, expressed even in the oaken pailings and wicket-gate of a country station, seemed well-nigh imperishable. In the middle of the nineteenth century it was still new and wonderful, by the middle of the twentieth it will be well-nigh obsolete; my generation, standing midway, as though on an eminence, can look forward and back, and see both the beginning and the end, or, at any rate, the transformation of all that is expressed in the magnificent gesture of a North-Western guard giving the signal for departure.

And so, before the subject becomes too old-fashioned, I would sound a small hymn of praise and gratitude for all those obscure lives owing to whose efficient service, in spite of an occasional mishap, we still travel safest when we travel fastest. The men employed in working the main-

line expresses of England, whether as engine-men, signal-men, guards, surface-men, or the hosts of even less conspicuous helpers and officials, would, if they could be collected together in one regiment, probably represent all that is best in intelligence, responsibility, honour, and efficiency of human life devoted to bodily labour in the world. They are the results of a long system of promotion and selection by merit; no quality save that of merit, and actual fitness for the duty proposed, can avail a man anything in this world. It is a world, something like that which lives on ships, entirely detached from the world of fixed labour and environment; its life is lived in motion, and when it comes to rest it ceases to live. From the moment that a great main-line express train comes into being, and some hours before it starts on its actual journey, a whole system or organization of human effort is thrilled into wakeful life; miles in front of it, as it speeds along, the thrill passes invisibly through the green country, arresting the attention of the signalman reading in the sunshine in another county, governing the movement of the pointsman's wife as, with her eyes on the clock, she puts the potatoes on the fire, entering and disturbing the placid thoughts of market gardeners, whose baskets of fruit or vegetables must be ready for the dining-car a couple of hours hence, or rousing to wakefulness the staff of a sleepy station far away. Before and behind it, in punctual and

ordered economy, this influence wakes up and dies down; and in the midst of it the train itself storms along, a thing swift and tormented, but the vehicle of a dozen placid occupations: the guard checking his lading of newspapers and parcels, the cook peeling the potatoes in the kitchen-car, the waiters laying the tables, the engine-driver himself, in the very storm-centre, studying with one eye the delicate adjustment of a needle that indicates gentle and invisible pressures, and with the other noting the fixed invitation of the signals and the cattle dreaming in the fields.

* * *

Of all the expresses that keep time with the sun throughout England, two are more delightful to me than any others — the Dutchman or Cornish express, and the Irish mail. The North-Western is a great aristocrat among railways, of an ancient title and dignity and, although deriving great revenues from commerce and textile properties, full of the pride of mighty lineage and tradition. The Great Western, on the other hand, is like a country squire; of old irreproachable family also, but content with a domestic rather than an official life; more interested in the condition of crops than the price of coal, less involved with governments, not quite such a stickler for etiquette, but solid and substantial as England herself and a gentleman through and through. It is true the Great

Western has some petty entanglements near London; it is true that it goes through Ealing; but it marches through it on a great broad fourway track as though its destination were the setting sun.

The North-Western, on the other hand, with all its mighty commercial industries, its vast family connections, has to do with much that is humble and petty; but it does as much as possible of it by deputy, and keeps its express lines sacred. Even what is sordid it dignifies by its connection; and in some terrible dark little town of the Potteries the sight of the white and chocolate of the North-Western railway carriage will give you a sense of home and hope, and a promise of escape from your melancholy environment. The North-Western is seen at its best in the Irish mail —better even than in the August Scotch expresses loaded with dogs and dowagers, when every compartment is reserved, and when the platform at Euston is lined with footmen. The Irish mail is a train of serious travel; you can tell at once when you get into it the destination of the passengers, whether they are for Ireland or for Chester; and, if you fall into pleasant conversation with a passenger, he will as likely as not try to sell you a horse—'the best mare 'n Ireland.' The day mail to Ireland is to me a most friendly and interesting piece of life—partly because it goes to Ireland, and partly because it is unchanged from

month to month, worked by the same drivers, the same guards, the same attendants. It is pleasant to take up a conversation where you dropped it a year before with 'Do you still have a P.W. slack at Aber Cross?'—even though such conversation be unintelligible to the readers of this page; it is pleasant to see the sacred word 'Holyhead' all along the train; pleasant to skim smoothly through the sunny pasture-lands of the midlands, and to alight and watch the momentary bustle at Crewe, where all the Irish traffic from the North and East is waiting to join you. It is pleasant to turn the corner at Chester and roar along that hoary sea-front of Wales, to see the green water and brown seaweed beneath you for a moment as you thunder, unashamed, beneath the ancient doorways of Conway Castle; pleasant to watch for the puff of white steam at the other end of the horseshoe beyond Abergele, which tells you that the Up Mail from Holyhead is keeping time; pleasant to pass it in the sunshine with a brief roar and rattle, and realise that other people in it, a mile away now, are placidly reading the papers or eating their luncheon. It is wonderful to thunder through the iron tunnel over the Straits of Menai, and catch a glimpse of the graceful snow-white curves of Telford's Road bridge; a little melancholy, somehow, to race over the bare expanse of Anglesey, and at last to leave your friendly train by a wooden platform across which the signal halliards of the

mail-steamer are slatting and jumping in the wind.

* * *

The Cornish express is less exciting, less detached from the general life of England. It is not freighted, like the Irish mail, with grotesque young priests, Government officials, and women who have come four hundred miles for a dinner-party; but with placid west-country people, who have somehow become Cornish by the time the train has left Plymouth. It goes through the most dignified and peaceful counties in England; as it makes its day's journey the speech of its people becomes broader and richer; it runs for a time so close beside the sea that the engines and carriages are often wet with spray, and the deep boom of a breaking wave sounds through the roar and rattle that echo from the sandstone cliffs. Sometimes it follows the long winding Cornish valleys, and sometimes leaps rivers and great arms of the sea, so that you are at one moment deep in a coombe and at another looking down on the deck of a battleship. It knows weary climbs up, and long coasting runs down its winding gradients; and it comes to rest hard by the end of everything in England, where on three sides are nothing but the sea and the sea-winds.

There is no train in England that seems to give you such a bird's-eye view of its own course as

did the old 'Dutchman,' before they made the new line that cut out Bath and Bristol. The first straight flight to Bristol, then a sharp turn to the left through the Mendip Hills, and down to the south-west, then a sharp turn to the right and west again along the Devonshire coast and through the middle of Cornwall, with the sea now on one side and now on the other, across valleys, into tunnels, round curves, and through cuttings to the sound of rocky echoes and the smell of salt and clover. It is all nothing to the busy staff of the train; and yet it is something, too; the guard, who sits in his sunny window-seat puzzling out his waybill, sees Reading when he looks up from one entry, Swindon as he checks another, and is interrupted in the next as the train plunges beneath the deep woods of Corsham. But his interest in it all is a particular and technical one; and as the train roars across a little culvert, and gives you a heavenly glimpse of some homestead where a smooth river winds among lawns, he takes up a mysterious piece of yellow paper, writes '1.37' on it, folds it up, and puts it into a box. The culvert was the end of a running section, though to you it was nothing more than a view of river and lawn.

* * *

I love these two expresses because they each go to a definite place—places very remote indeed

from the world that circles round inner England. The Scotch expresses somehow lose identity in their travels through the populous part of northern England; the eastern expresses are associated chiefly in my mind with abuse for their unpunctuality, and with hazy notions of village immorality; the south coast expresses are associated with holiday and pleasure-seeking, which, although it may be all very well as a thing in itself, is not a dignified thing from a railway point of view. Moreover, there is an air of cockneydom about all the southern expresses. Brighton trains are filled with stockbrokers and actresses; Bournemouth trains with invalids and old generals; Portsmouth trains with soldiers and bluejackets spouting tobacco-juice—or at least so it seems to me. As for the Continental expresses, they are humble servants that do not represent an end in themselves, but merely represent the first or last uncomfortable link in a long chain of travel. If you have come off the P. & O. at Marseilles, you cannot be expected to be much engaged with the expresses from Dover to Charing Cross; and if you have booked your seat from London to Constantinople, the sight of the green engine that pulls you to Dover will not excite you.

Once across the water it is another matter; there where the long brown carriages with their brass lettering and their tables gay with flowers are ranked, labelled with great historic international

names, you are in the presence of the giants of the railway world, the Royal Family of travel; and there are few titles which I covet so much as that of a Director of the *Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-lits et des Grands Expresses Européens.* The wheels that you see there will to-morrow be white with the sacred dust of Italy, or baked by the suns of Spain; will thread their way through the mountains of Bohemia, or across the steppes of Russia. They are a nation of themselves, these brown, dusty cars; perhaps the most powerful nation in the world, and the one on which the peace of Europe may depend.

IX

A STUDY IN TWO STYLES

A STUDY IN TWO STYLES

I

AFTER STEELE

THERE are no pleasures like those which are unprepared, and no delights equal to the sudden and unexpected favours of fortune. That we have a mind to it, is surely a better reason for any action, than that we had made a plan to do it; for although the most careful plans may come to shipwreck, the man who is expecting nothing can never be disappointed. I lay one night last week at Blackwall, and being awaked very early in the morning by the bustle attending the departure of a great ship for the Cape, I made a resolution to sail in her to Southampton, and betook myself immediately on board. I must confess to being vastly pleased with the accommodation on this fine ship, and amused myself in observing how her decks were laid out like streets and squares, with a tavern here, a workshop there, and garden-seats and chairs, so that her citizens might take their morning walks, drink their morning draughts, and afterwards sit down to a meditation in the sunshine. I beg people's pardon for an odd habit I have, which is to sing aloud, even in public

places, when I am anyway pleased or light-hearted; for it then seems to me as though the whole world had been designed for my pleasure and entertainment, and every sight of a roguish face, or a glance of a pair of bright eyes, like a flower tossed to me by some happy and friendly Providence. There were several passengers on board; and, what with the political discourses of some grave old men, the smiles and coquetting of some half-a-dozen ruddy-cheeked virgins, and several games at Bear with a tribe of children, I was very handsomely entertained during the voyage to Southampton.

When we arrived there, we found another great ship almost ready to sail, and as soon as I had landed I made my way to her, where my busy inclination forced me to make one of the crowd upon her decks. The bright sunshine, the blue water, the gay dresses of the women, the fluttering of flags, and movements of the sailors made as brave a picture as you could wish for, and I tired myself out with pleasure in observing the occupations and hurryings of the crowd. There were some men loading great baskets of vegetables, and I could not refrain from speculating upon their destiny; how this cabbage might be eaten in the Channel, this string of onions in the Azores, and that crate furnish a dish of beans on the Line. Moreover, it was a strange thought to me, that these travellers, although they should occupy the same beds and sit at the same table for so many

weeks to come, would nevertheless make so great a journey, not only through space, but through time and the seasons; would follow the summer half round the world and see, through the same windows out of which they had looked upon the Solent, new stars shining in the southern skies. And although I was not above an hour at the Docks, I journeyed in spirit with these passengers through a great many leagues of sea-travel. I heard the surges crashing on the beaches of Madeira, sighted the Peak of Teneriffe standing amid the waves, was sickened with the heat of the sun upon the Line, and saw the snow shining upon the roof of Table Mountain. In short, I made a great voyage, and pleased myself with a variety of sights and adventures at no more cost than the price of a seat in the London stage and a shilling to a Southampton waterman.

When I returned to my chambers, I writ down these minutes of what I had seen; and, as I never care to keep the benefits of such an excursion entirely to myself, I considered what instruction I should propose to my readers out of the events of my holiday. And I thought it of use if they could learn with me how great a store of pleasure and entertainment the world offers for those who will keep their eyes open to pleasing sights, and their minds ready for gratification. One man may travel round the world and see nothing beyond his own narrow view and the scenery which he carries with him; while

another, although he travel not a mile beyond his own door, may by the encouragement of this agreeable humour journey a great way and taste a variety of pleasures, may recognise a friend in every new face, and crowd a generous piece of life within the compass of one short hour.

II

AFTER ADDISON

Going yesterday to Southampton to meet my friend Will Wimble on his return from the Cape, I occupied myself for some time very agreeably in observing the crowd of passengers embarking upon a ship on the point of sailing. And as there is nothing more within the province of a Spectator than public occasions and ceremonies, I made it my business to study very attentively the scene displayed before me; where the bustle of the travellers, the coming and going of porters and stevedores, the cries of the seamen, and the busy preparations of the officers afforded me an infinite diversity of solid and substantial entertainment.

For my part, I am never so well employed as when I can thus observe the behaviour of my fellow-men in circumstances at once so urgent and so confused, and never so happy as when I am free to mingle unobserved among a throng in which so many human passions are at work, and where so

great a variety of conduct is displayed. I must confess I look upon the Docks as a great exchange, in which every nation of the world has its representative, and where in men, no less than in merchandise, the necessities of the world are fulfilled and its differences adjusted. I have observed an English Bishop to dispose himself in a cabin lately vacant of a Portuguese Ambassador, and an heathen Prince, making his first visit to England, to come ashore in the same boat as had just put a missionary on board an East Indiaman. Nor could I fail to observe how men and women of different countries, estates, and degrees, by being mingled and confused together within the walls of one ship, were reduced to an equality of fortune, and exposed to the same risks and penalties in their promiscuous adventure upon the seas.

Upon my arrival at the Docks, I entertained myself with the loading of some cheeses, and was exceedingly pleased to see with what sobriety and deliberation the stevedores worked. Although the bells were ringing and the ship on the point of going to sea, these labourers exhibited no haste or impatience, and paused and looked about them whenever they had a mind. One fellow in particular, of great stature and ferocious appearance, whose business it was to carry the cheeses to the foot of the gangway, had so gentle a disposition that he refused to take any advantage over an old and feeble man, his neighbour in the business, and,

although he could have carried his three cheeses while the old fellow was carrying one, forebore to put him to shame of his years, and waited patiently with his one cheese until the old man could run back for it.

I could not but be very much delighted with observing the various demeanour of the passengers as they entered the ship, and the way in which they disposed themselves according to their several habits and circumstances. I saw one young lady, of a very elegant appearance, who was entirely occupied with the counting of her trunks, and could hardly afford a word of conversation for her old father whom she was leaving. There was an old maid, travelling on a visit to her sister, who nearly had a fit when she caught sight of a huge black that was among the crew, vowing she would not trust herself in the ship with him, and could only be appeased by the captain telling her, in a very gallant and obliging manner, that he would charge himself with the duty of seeing that she came by no mischief. In a word, I could not but observe how every one around me was so occupied with some trifling matter as to be entirely forgetful of the circumstances in which all were assembled, and how more than one passenger that had brought relatives and acquaintances several days' journey to take farewell of him was so much engaged with the steward when the ship sailed that he forget to say good-bye after all, and only remembered his friends

when he could no longer communicate with them, save by waving a large pocket-handkerchief.

I know that occasions of this kind are regarded by some as melancholy, and by others as merely fatiguing. For my own part, I am very well entertained by them, and the contemplation of what in others produces a humour of sadness provokes in me only quiet and sober thoughts. When I observe the anguish of young lovers at parting, I am reconciled with a period of life that has cooled my blood of such painful ardours; when I see the tears of a wife at losing her husband, I think with what complaisance she may soon be brought to regard his absence; when I consider the tearing asunder of mother from child, brother from sister, and friend from friend, I reflect upon the folly of setting our affections on things which the caprice of destiny may remove or destroy. When I observe the various temper of the passengers; of some that set forth in fear of the sea, and some that are anxious only for their baggage; of some that go to make a fortune, and some to lose it; of some that part from their friends, and others that journey to meet them, I remember that great voyage upon which we are all fellow-travellers, and look to make the same port.

X

IN MEMORIAM

IN MEMORIAM

CHARLES FURSE: *obit* 17 OCTOBER, 1904

WHEN our friend dies we do well to pause for a moment in the act of living, and try to estimate what we have gained, what we have lost, what has perished with him, and what remains. For those who were in daily intimacy with our friend this moment is obscure and terrible; for those less intimate, but still within the circle of his affections, it has a solemnity that robs it of terrors. For the world at large the death of Charles Furse meant only the loss of a name—and two years before his death it would not even have meant that; for those who care for good art it meant the appreciation in value of certain pictures, and the certainty that a genius, who seemed only to be in the beginning of its strength, had, after all, said its last word. But for the circle or friends who stood between the careless throng and the tragic centre of his affections this man's death meant a certain contraction of life, a certain dimming of the light, a certain loss of human colour in the world.

He was a man to whom only sympathy and affection gave the key. He was often a puzzle to mere acquaintances, who expected, perhaps, to

find a puling æsthete, and found instead a strong and living man. He was a puzzle even to those friends who only knew him on one side, to men, perhaps, who had shot over autumn covers with him, and whose small minds recoiled from his description of a sunset. He was, as I remember him, a man who could accommodate himself to many sides of life not usually combined; and, indeed, when one says that, one is only saying that he was a large-hearted man. A pillar of country houses, a strong tower to anxious hostesses, a great smoking-room companion, an enlivener of dinner-tables, an expert with the conversational rapier, an intimate of women and a friend of men, he grasped life as it came with both hands; and with all this he lived first of all for his art, which he regarded and pursued with a Trappist austerity. The world—or that part of it that cares—knows all about his painting. I know of him as the companion of walks over cloud-shadowed Surrey downs, or across autumnal water meadows, or through London streets; and it is thus that I like to remember him.

* * *

Charles Furse was too much of a man to be for ever prating of his art; but he had that whole-hearted delight in its technicalities that is a part of genius. He loved paint and colour sensually, as a cat loves the sun; and I think Nature was to

him a billowly, hardy comrade, his fellow-artist in the display of form and colour, rather than the solemn idol that other men worship. His attitude towards her was too intimate to be religious; he took her as he found her, and did not shrink from discovering her faults. He could talk delightfully of the great green out-of-doors that filled his life, and he could (and would) talk absurdly, too, if he had a mind. He loved that conversational trick that consists of saying with assurance the very opposite of what one is expected to say; and the presence of a Philistine would be enough to embark him upon a long conversational voyage of solemn extravagance. There was no length to which he would not go; and stupid people who heard him on these occasions would put him down for an affected poseur, who was incapable of being natural. A strident and dominating voice, which he assumed at times, added to the effect; and his bulky, fleshy body, his rather heavy face, and his great quaking laugh rather contradicted in him the conventional paragon of an artist.

* * *

These were externals; good and lovable things, but perishable, and at this moment dead and perished for us. The incorruptible, the imperishable spirit and essence of the man, that is as living with us to-day as it was five years ago—what of that?

Well, as I know it, it is a big and companionable, a kind and understanding and human spirit; a spirit incapable of any pettiness or meanness, and as sane and brave as Nature herself. He loved the 'garish day'—and why not? The good, windy, sunny, garish day—how many of us shrink from its strong lights, and hug the shadowed and sheltered places! But not this man, who loved the suns and high winds of life, and would talk down a south-wester, and bring the very sun itself upon his palette. I find no one of his pictures so entirely characteristic of Charles Furse as his 'Diana of the Uplands'—the woman and the leashed hounds, and the moor and the sky. There you have the gusto and the lust of life, and the gusto and lust of paint—the straining hounds, the glorious chariot-clouds, the woman leaning against the wind, and with her lithe shape and her twilight eyes. It is a sonata of strong wind and sun, of the pride of life and woman's love—in a word, 'the garish day': and I like to think that Charles Furze put into it something of what was best and happiest in his life.

* * *

Not all of his life was of a piece; there were the conventional side and the strong and unconventional; and to both, I think, he gave himself with a whole heart, heedless of where they might lead him. 'Impulse,' we say, deeming our friend impulsive, inconsistent; and yet to be consistently

impulsive is to be very near the great universal heart—a far from ignoble destiny. It means at least a freedom from the slavery in which so many walk through all their days; it means an escape from the exhausted thrice-breathed air of the common herd, and a sweetening of the blood with the breath of forests; it means a hard climb upwards, away from the beaten roads, beyond the habitations of men, beyond the tree-line, to those lonely rocky places where for the strong there is little or no companionship, but only foothold and a view of the world. It means danger and risk of failure, perhaps many stumblings and bitter mistakes, secret falterings and sinkings of heart; but, oh, rather than to stifle a lifetime on the levels, it is better to burst the lungs with one full breath of the air that blows on Pisgah! And this he did whose short life has enriched the life of his country, and will continue to enrich it when all memory of the man himself shall have vanished.

Honest, great-hearted, good Charles Furse! The world spins on without you, and carries us on its roaring tides to what remains of sorrow and joy and labour; but in the harmony of life our ears listen for one singing, vibrant tone—and will listen still in vain.

XI
POSTSCRIPT

POSTSCRIPT

ALTHOUGH most of these chapters appeared in newspapers or reviews, I do not ask for them the indulgence claimed for reprinted journalism. They are not journalism, although they were printed in journals. In each case they represent something that I wished then to say, wish still to say, and would not be able to say any better than this though I were to write it all anew. In other words, they were not written to fit any particular place or paper; but, having been written, places and papers were found to fit them. Thus, although these papers were written to appear here, they (with the exception of 'A Morning Dream in Ireland,' which has not been published before) first enjoyed in slightly different form the hospitality of *The Pilot*, *The Manchester Guardian*, *The New Age*, *The Daily Mail*, *The Saturday Review*, *The Outlook*, and *The Tribune;* and I make my acknowledgments to the editors and proprietors of these papers. But, for the reasons I have given, the faults of my work must not be laid to their charge, or put down to the exigencies of journalism. I offer it as literature, and ask for judgment by the severer code. The little parallel study in the styles of Steele and Addison is perhaps an exception; it

is a piece of studio work whose existence can only be justified if it affords interest or amusement to those of my readers who are also writers, and take an interest in technical processes.

With regard to the chapter called 'Houses of Bondage,' if that study in prison life were a study in sociology pure and simple, the absence from it of any discussion of what is known as the Borstal System of training for young convicts would be inexcusable. But in writing of this kind I think that pictures of things as I have seen them are likely to be of more value than any conclusions I myself might draw from them.

F. Y.

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